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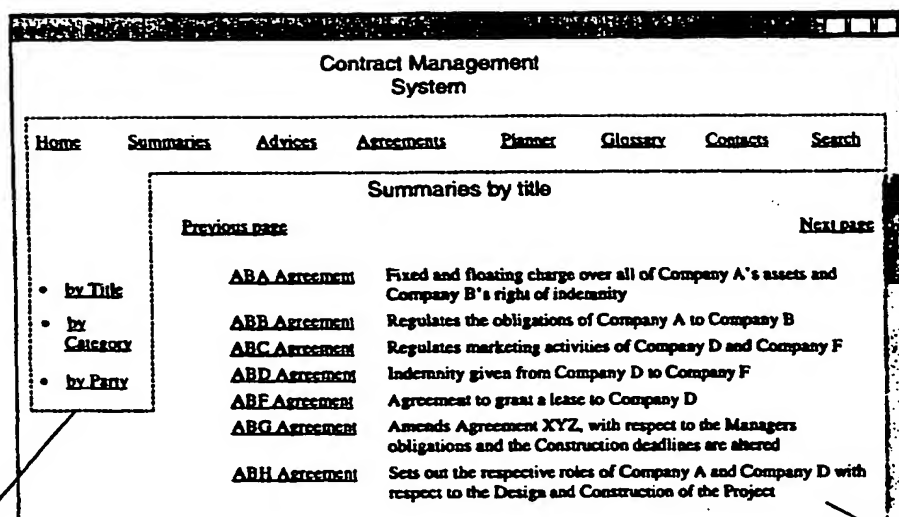
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[Continued on next page]

(54) Title: **AN INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**



(57) Abstract: An information management system able to assist with the management and monitoring of a multiplicity of documents containing rights and/or obligations including due dates, arising out of a plurality of primary documents. The system includes a database adapted to store in an electronic and searchable format the plurality of primary documents, in addition to an electronic diary system linked to the database which records at least selected due dates arising out of the primary documents. There is also provided an access means for use in interrogating the database and diary system; and a display means for selectively displaying both details of the documents and the due dates.

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Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	US, A, 5182705 (BARR et al) 26 January 1993 See whole document	1-28
X	US, A, 5557515 (ABBRUZZESE et al) 17 September 1996 See whole document	1-28

☐ Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C ☐ See patent family annex

* Special categories of cited documents:	
"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance	"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention
"E" earlier application or patent but published on or after the international filing date	"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone
"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)	"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art
"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means	"&" document member of the same patent family
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An Information Management System

Field of the invention

This invention relates to an information management system and method of implementing same. More particularly although not exclusively, the invention relates to an information management system which can be used to monitor rights and obligations defined in documents stored in the system.

Background of the invention

Many individuals and organisations enter into contracts under which they must take specified actions by particular dates. Failure to comply with the contractual undertakings can have serious consequences.

For example, a corporation involved in a large project, such as a construction project, might enter into a number of different contracts with a number of different parties which prescribe a range of obligations that must be carried out by the contracting parties within defined time frames.

It is common with large projects for there to be fifty or more separate contracts, with very complex and multi-tiered inter-relationships or interdependencies between various project contracts.

In such circumstances, it is very important to ensure that, during the entire course of a project, all affected parties are aware of:

- which project contracts are affected by any particular event and, if so, how and to what extent; and
- in particular, where contract terms change, as often occurs during on-going projects, the implications of the change across the whole of the project's contractual matrix.

A diary system can be set up to ensure that the required actions are taken within the required time frames however there may be limitations with such a system as:

- managing a necessarily complex diary system can be a onerous, requiring significant resources; and
- such a system will not normally keep track of the contractual interdependencies and project dynamics mentioned above.

In this regard, it is not for example, unusual with large projects or undertakings for their to be fifty or more contracts entered into, each of which requires actions to be undertaken at predetermined times and which may extend over a period of months or years.

Where new contracts are entered into or terms of contacts change for any reason, it is important to ensure that any new contracts or changes do not conflict with previously agreed undertakings. Therefore before agreeing to a particular change a corporation might often need to be made fully aware of the other obligations which have previously been agreed so as to ensure that no new undertakings are agreed to which is in conflict with previously agreed undertakings.

Where in the specification the word "document" is used, it is to be interpreted broadly to include within its scope contracts, agreements, legislation, electronic text files, drawings or figures and any other item, or group of items, of written or printed matter.

Where in the specification the term "due date" is used, it is to be interpreted broadly to include within its scope a calendar date and/or time in which a specified event, action or milestone must be executed.

Summary of the invention

According to a first aspect of the present invention there is provided an information management system able to assist with the management and monitoring of a multiplicity of documents containing rights and/or obligations including due dates arising out of a plurality of primary documents, the system including:

a database adapted to store in an electronic and searchable format the plurality of primary documents;

an electronic diary system linked to the database which records at least selected due dates arising out of the primary documents;

access means for use in interrogating the database and diary system; and

display means for selectively displaying both details of the documents and the due dates.

According to a second aspect of the present invention there is provided a method for implementing an information management system able to assist with the management and monitoring of a multiplicity of documents containing rights and/or obligations including due dates arising out of a plurality of primary documents, the method including the steps of:

providing a database adapted to store in an electronic and searchable format the plurality of primary documents;

providing an electronic diary system linked to the database which records at least selected due dates arising out of the primary documents;

providing access means for use in interrogating the database and diary system; and

providing display means for selectively displaying both details of the documents and the due dates.

In the preferred form of the invention the database may be divided into sections, each section cross referenced to the others, the sections including at least a first section which incorporates summaries of each of the primary documents stored in the database, a second section which incorporates the primary document themselves, and a third section which incorporates the defined terms in each of the primary documents. Furthermore, the database may include a fourth section of related documents, ie, documents which in some way or another relate to the primary documents. Those related documents may be in the form of advices, correspondence, annexures, contact details, standard clauses, or the like.

Preferably the database is sortable. For example, the documents may be sortable by title, by topic, or by party. Further possible sort topics may be appropriate such as, for example, sorting by obligation, creation date, level of importance, and various subject matter topics. Thus, arranging and organising of the database can be determined in accordance with nature of the documents and the purpose for which the documents might be required by a person wishing to access the documents. Different types of projects might require different sort categories.

The electronic diary system will preferably record all applicable dates which arise out of the documents. The diary system will preferably have some form of notification arrangement associated therewith, such as an appropriate

notification message (ie such as electronic mail) being sent to an appropriate individual, which will be generated, preferably automatically at specified times prior to when each due date occurs and/or on the due date itself. A diary date may be entered into the electronic diary automatically when the primary document is entered into the database, or it may be entered manually by the person loading the document into the database. Preferably the diary entry will include an appropriate cross referencing arrangement so that each diary entry is cross referenced to the portion of the particular document which causes that diary entry to be generated. For example, a diary date could be cross-linked to the clause in the particular primary document which generated the diary entry.

Preferably the system is integrated into a communications network (ie such as the internet or an intranet) and reminders generated by the system are forwarded via the network to individuals who take responsibility for carrying out the tasks to which the due dates relate. Reminders may also be sent to others who monitor whether those tasks have been carried out.

Optionally the system may be updated or maintained or monitored using the communications network and, indeed, new documents and diary entries may be added to the system via such network.

The access means for use in interrogating the database and diary system may comprise a keyboard and screen so that the system is readily accessible using a personal computer connected to the database. The display means for displaying details of the documents may, similarly, comprise a personal computer, or it may comprise a printout, electronic message forwarded to a personal computer, or any other appropriate display or message generation means.

The documents with which the system may operate may be of any appropriate nature. Typically each document will have a multiplicity of rights and/or obligations including due dates associated therewith. Those dates would typically be internal to the documents and may be distributed in different clauses spread throughout the document, or they may be dates which are external to the documents but which relate to the transaction of which the documents form a part.

One of the more appropriate uses of the system could be for the monitoring of a multiplicity of different and multiparty contracts entered into by a range of different parties. The system will also be suitable for dealing with a range of other types of documents such as patent specifications, staff reports, personnel documents, prospectuses, bid documents, performance reports, trust deeds, constitutions, multiple leases, funds management agreements and the like. Such documents may be collated and managed, and due dates associated with such documents monitored, using the system of the invention.

Brief description of the drawings

An embodiment of the invention is described below by way of example with reference to the accompanying illustrations. It will be appreciated that the example selected is but one possible use of the system and therefore should not be construed as in any way limiting the ambit of the invention.

Figs. 1 - 12 show example screens which would be presented to a user employing the system for managing a plurality of contracts.

Fig. 13 is an information flow diagram of an information management system accessible to multiple users via a communications network according to the present invention.

Detailed description of the embodiments

The illustrations depict one embodiment of a typical screen architecture or design which would serve as the user interface between the information management system of the invention and a user. As mentioned above, it is envisaged that the system would be set up to monitor a large number of documents and provide due date notifications as and when events which require action, as dictated by the documents, fall due. Typically, and as shown in the present embodiment, the documents comprise contracts relating to a particular project.

In the present embodiment the system is set up to monitor the large array of different contracts which an infrastructure project manager might enter into with various service organisations which interface with the project manager in relation to the use of the infrastructure facility.

It will be appreciated that the types of organisations which might be involved in that interface include such groups as:

- municipalities;
- traffic authorities
- signage organisations;
- medical services;
- repair and maintenance services;
- security services;
- advertising organisations;

Certainly it would not be considered unusual for an infrastructure project to have entered into a hundred or more contracts with these types of different services suppliers. Each contract with a third party organisation would typically have rights and obligations associated therewith, including obligations to undertake specified tasks or make specified payments at predetermined times or on the happening of predetermined or preselected events.

Very often the project environment is dynamic, with contracts being of a developing or changing nature.

In such an environment, the management company would need to the tools to enable it to ensure that:

- the management company;
- relevant suppliers; and
- all other persons whose performance is affected by the relevant contracts,

are aware of the implications of changes within the project contract matrix and, overall, satisfy their respective obligations.

Referring to Fig. 1, it will be noted that the screen is a display of a typical web browser screen for the preferred embodiment.

In the preferred embodiment, the system is network based which allows the system to be accessed by authorised client users of the Internet.

The screen itself is divided into two sections, namely an index section shown by broken lines as index section 10 and an information section 12. The index section 10 provides a facility for navigating within the database and the information section 12 provides information, at different levels of detail, of the different sections of the database.

The screen shown in Fig. 1 details what are in effect summaries of the different agreements contained within the system. The summaries may be sorted to suit the user and the screen shown at Fig. 1 has the summaries sorted by alphabetically "title". It will be noted that the summaries may also be sorted by "category", ie. the topic to which the agreements relate, or by "party".

Fig. 2 depicts the summaries sorted by category. Two of the categories are depicted in the Fig. 2 screen and other categories include "design and construction", "insurances", "intellectual property" and the like. It will be noted that each of the categories is expandable and in Fig. 2 the category "security" has been expanded to illustrate the seven agreements which are broadly relevant to that topic.

It will be noted that the seven agreements which are listed under "security" have short summaries associated therewith which provide an outline of the nature of those particular agreements. A user of the system who is in any way familiar with the contracts which are stored in the database would be able to identify which particular contract is being referred to from the details set out in a summary. By selecting the relevant hypertext link, a user can immediately access the content of these summaries.

Turning to the screen shown in Fig. 3, a summary of a particular agreement is shown in more detail. In this instance the screen shows details of the "ABA Agreement (Summary)". In particular, the summary shows details of the parties and the purpose of the agreement. Also, the categories broadly relevant to the agreement are listed and electronically linked to relevant detail in either the summary and/or the particular agreement. The summary also contains a brief description of the important clauses of the relevant agreement, together with hypertext links directly to the relevant clauses in the actual agreement. Thus, the database stores a summary of the contract with access to the individual contract clauses also being obtained through a readily expandable indexing system which enables a user to quickly and efficiently seek out the clause which he or she requires.

A user has multiple means of viewing the contents of a summary. A user can view the contents by starting at the beginning of the summary and then moving down through its contents by using the arrows on the right hand side of the screen. Alternatively, by selecting one of the headings (eg. Breach events, or Key date(s)) on the index section 10, the user is immediately shown the relevant part of the summary.

If a user is interested in immediately viewing any or all of the topics identified as relevant to the ABA Agreement, they first select the hypertext link "Categories" shown on the index section 10, and the screen shown in Fig. 4 is displayed on the web browser.

The screen shown in Fig. 4 illustrates to the user, the categories which are broadly relevant to the ABA Agreement. If, for example, the user wants to see the summary's description relevant to Maintenance and Repairs, the "Summary below" hyperlink text is selected for that category and the user is then shown the relevant part of the summary. Alternatively, if the user wants to view the actual clause of the contract relevant to Maintenance and Repairs, the user selects the "[Clause 8]" hypertext link and the screen shown in Fig. 5 is displayed on the web browser so that the user can view that relevant clause of the ABA Agreement.

Using the embodiment of the present invention, it is possible for a user to view parts of an Agreement in summary form and then, as the information of each document is cross-referenced using hypertext linking on the web page, review those other documents or parts of documents which require review.

Turning to Fig. 6, a screen is shown which details a list of "advices" which might be relevant to the management of the infrastructure project. Those advices might be in the form of, for example, letters of advice or memoranda from solicitors, replies to questionnaires provided by service providers, or any other document which the user of the system feels should be included in a list of, "advices". Optionally those advices may be accessible only to certain users of the system, such a top level management, or different categories of advices might be accessible by different individuals within an organisation.

In other embodiments of the invention, the system could have further categories of documents added thereto, and the "advices" screen is intended to suggest one form of additional screen which might be suitable for an information management system of the type under consideration.

Fig. 7 depicts a screen which lists all of the agreements, by title, on the system. A user can view the text of a particular agreement by selecting the hypertext link for the relevant agreement. The example shows only eleven agreements but clearly, as mentioned above, the system may contain as many agreements as the user feels is appropriate. Typically a system would be used for one particular project but the extent to which a user bundles together agreements relating to more than one project depends, of course, on a particular user's preferences.

Fig. 8 depicts a "planner" or diary screen. Fig. 9 and 10 depict the monthly checklist screen.

The planner screen (Fig. 8) is designed to notify the user when events or obligations detailed by the contracts stored in the database fall due for action. Fig. 8 depicts the month of January 1999. For example, the entry on January 1 1999 indicates that "Company A to pr..." in hypertext link. If this is selected the browser displays the details for the due date: "Company A to provide Operation and Maintenance Report" which must be provided on 1 January 1999. The browser also displays a hypertext link to the description of that obligation in the relevant summary and a hypertext link to the relevant clause in the agreement itself. This enables the user to access readily more information relevant to the particular due date.

Thus, a user of the system can use the diary system for monitoring dates of importance relating to any of the clauses of all of the contracts on the system.

It will be appreciated that some of those dates would typically occur monthly, some of them annually, and others might occur on a more random or adhoc basis.

Referring now to Figs. 9 and 10, there is depicted a monthly checklist screen. This is designed to list chronologically for the user in a checklist format, the diary entries for that month. Thus, a user can use this list to check that the obligations have been fulfilled.

When the contracts are entered into the database all due dates which arise out of the contracts should be entered into the planner. One possible option is for the due dates to be extracted automatically from the contract at the time of entry or loading of the contracts into the database. It is envisaged that this would require the dates to be entered into the contracts with a suitable "marker" attached thereto so as to allow for automatic extraction thereby ensuring that the system would be sufficiently "intelligent" to identify and extract dates from all the clauses of the contract.

Otherwise, the dates would simply be manually extracted by the person who downloads the contracts onto the database to thereby ensure that all appropriate diary dates are correctly entered against all relevant future obligations.

Thus, the system allows a user to interface a diary system with contract clause entries in a user friendly and readily accessible manner. The user is able to keep track of contracts relating to a particular project in one database and has comfort that certain dates relating to those contracts are stored in a correlated and cross-referenced diary system. Clearly, as the project develops and more contracts are added to the system the dates pertaining to those additional contracts can be included into the planner and, if necessary, conflicting dates identified. The system could be developed so that any conflicts, or certain types of conflicts, are automatically highlighted.

Fig. 11 depicts a "search" screen which can be used to search through the database for information which might pertain to a particular subject matter or phrase. Thus, if a user wished to find all clauses of the agreements on the system which might relate to an issue such as "Motorway" then the word "Motorway" is typed into the search block and a search carried out through all documents on the system for that term. Thus, provided the contracts have used relatively consistent terminology for the same types of matters then a search in this manner would allow the user to be reasonably confident that all clauses in the various contracts in the system which impact on those matters will be located in the search. Clearly this can have considerable advantages for the user of the system. Optionally the search tool may be made more sophisticated to allow for boolean searching thereby enabling a search to be more accurately targeted than simply for a particular term or phrase.

Fig. 12 depicts the results of the search which has been carried out and it would be noted that the results are listed in levels of relevance which is determined by the number of times the search term occurs in the relevant document. The more relevant clauses are listed at the top of the search results with a darker block adjacent to the first item, and the less relevant clauses listed at the bottom of the list, with a lighter block adjacent thereto. Clearly, where the database contains a large number of contracts the ability to search through those contracts, and list the search results in levels of relevance will be particularly advantageous.

It will be appreciated that the system described herein would be particularly advantageous for use with large projects or large undertakings. In order to review the contracts for the project it will not be necessary for any person to have access to a hard copy of the document. Multiple users can thus be given access to all, or selectively only some of the documents, and will be able search for particular information which pertains to their field of activity or for which they might be responsible. Thus, by accurately and responsibly managing the database a user can be confident that all persons who need access to the documents have access to a correct version of the document and that appropriate persons are all fully and timeously made aware of due dates which arise in relation to obligations arising out of those contracts.

Fig. 13 shows the flow of information between a network-based information management system and multiple client users for the preferred embodiment described above. The information management system database 21 is resident on a server 20 from which a client user 15 of the Internet 14 can retrieve stored data and make database queries. In this embodiment, the database can be interrogated by an application program 23 which operates on the UNIX operating system and the application program 23 is written in a SQL such as MySQL. The server 20 also supports a website 21 which is accessible to client users 15 via the Internet 14. The client users 15 typically will

have access to a personal computer 16 for connection to the server 20 via the Internet 14. Screen 17 is a user screen for displaying documents and database information as depicted in Figs. 1 to 12. Although not shown in Fig. 13, the client 15 may equally be a server linking a network of computers. Similarly it will be appreciated that the network linking the server 20 to the client users 15 may not be the Internet 14, but rather an intranet or some form of local area network (LAN).

It will also be possible for a user to outsource the management of the database. For example, where a user employs the services of a firm of solicitors to act on its behalf in preparing contracts and agreements it will be possible for the firm of solicitors to manage the database and thereby ensure that all contracts are loaded correctly onto the database, and all dates which arise out of those contracts are entered into the planner section of the database. It will be possible to add additional contracts, as they are entered into, onto the database from a remote location via the Internet which is one reason why it is preferable to have the system as a network based system. Also, a network based system allows individuals within a user organisation to be automatically reminded by electronic mail as and when obligations fall due and, as previously mentioned, it will be possible to remind different people within an organisation so as to ensure that checks and balances are built into the project.

Clearly, the invention may be easily modified to contain a host of different types of documents. For example, the system will be suitable for storing in electronic format a large number of patent specifications and all dates pertaining to those patent specifications can be stored in the planner section of the database. Thus, a user would be advised when renewal dates on particular patents fell due, and, once again, a user would have access to a cross linked system so that not only would the user be reminded when the dates fell due, but also have immediate access to the patent specifications stored on the system so as to be able to cross check which patent it was that had fallen due for renewal by checking on a summary of the patent, or the patent specification itself.

Clearly, other forms of documents could equally well be installed using this system. This system has particular application where there are a large number of complex documents, where there are multiple inter-relationships between the documents, and where dates and obligations are associated with the documents that are stored.

It will be understood that the invention disclosed and defined herein extends to all alternative combinations of two or more of the individual features mentioned or evident from the text or drawings. All of these different combinations constitute various alternative aspects of the invention.

The foregoing describes an embodiment of the present invention and modifications, obvious to those skilled in the art can be made thereto, without departing from the scope of the present invention.

Appendix A outlines a technical specification for another preferred embodiment and in particular describes certain elements of the system and the internal operations of the system.

Appendix A

1 Introduction

This document describes the architecture of the Contract Management System (CMS). The system is implemented as a Notes database.

It is assumed the reader is familiar with:

- Notes database design, including Domino applications and LotusScript,
- The functional specification of the system,
- Web browser software and elements of web design.

2 System overview

Briefly, the system is intended to assist an organisation which is a party to large number of contracts, etc. to meet its obligations under those contracts. It does so by providing an efficient means to access the contracts themselves, and analysis of the content.

In more detail, the functions of the system are:

To store the full text of various contracts, agreements, deeds, ("Agreements") etc. These are essentially flat documents.

To store summaries of the meaning, consequences of breach, etc ("Summaries") of those contracts, etc.

A glossary defining many of the terms used in the Agreements and Summaries.

To keep a calendar of certain dates which are important under the Agreements ("Key Dates"), and to optionally send email reminders to nominated people prior to those dates.

Full-text searching is permitted on the content of Agreements, Summaries and Advices.

Various navigation structures are in place to tie these functions together in useful ways.

- The system is intended to be used from the Notes client by editorial staff, and from the browser client for those who are only viewing the content. Because of this, there are many design elements with both a Notes client and a browser client version. For forms, the browser version's name has a "w" prefix, eg the "Reckoner" form's browser equivalent is named "wReckoner". For views, the browser version is under the "WebV" hierarchy.

3 Elements of the system**3.1 Agreements****(a) Overview**

Agreements are essentially electronic copies of the legal document in question.

The components of the "Agreement" form are:

Title, Section: metadata used to place the document in views. Section is also used for inter-section navigation.

Draft and Status reflect the workflow status of the document.

Readers is computed based on Draft and Status.

Body is rich text, and contains the text of a section of the agreement.

(b) Navigation

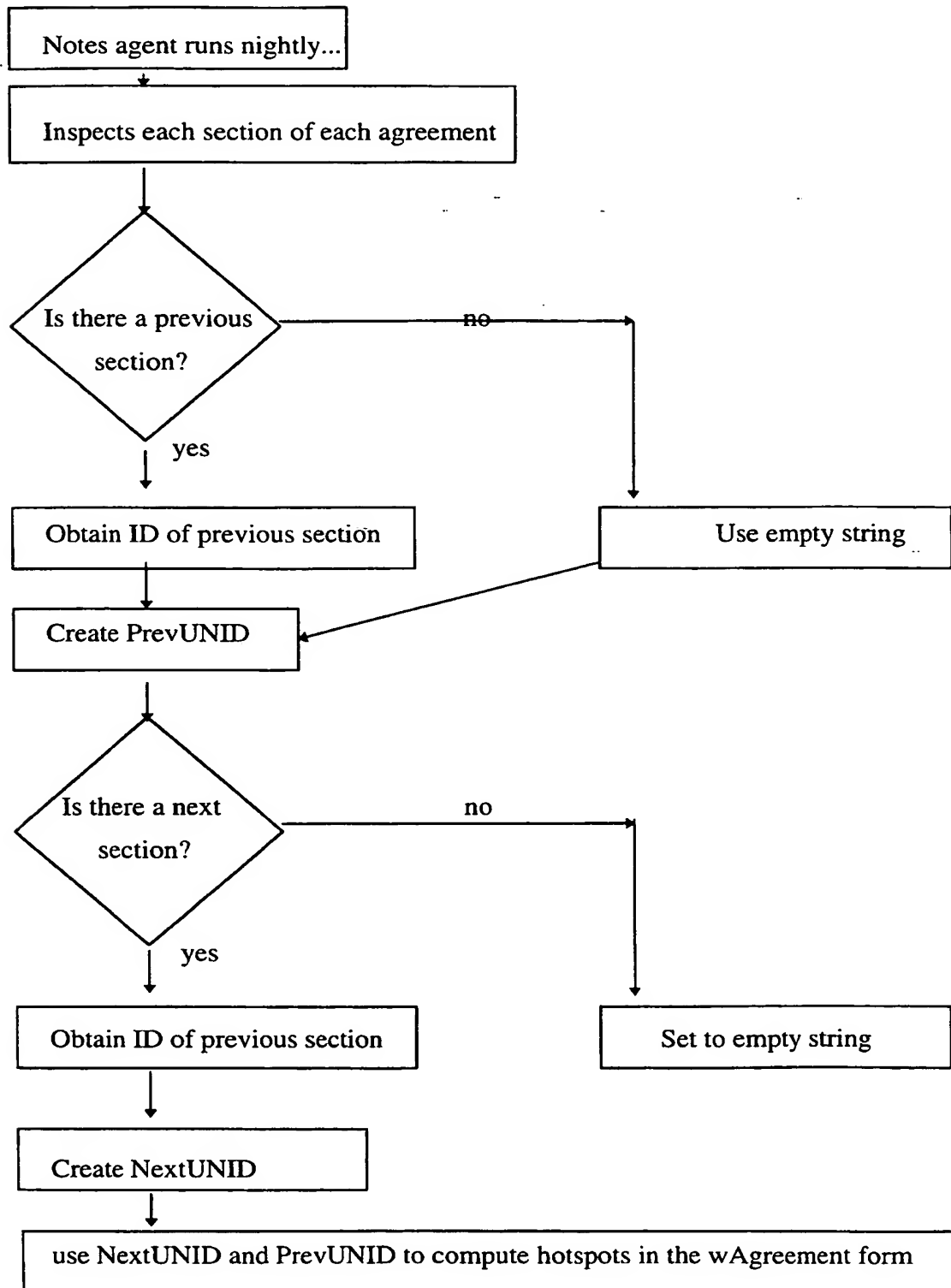
The system is intended to store Agreements broken into readable sections, to avoid displaying a large slab of text the user must scroll through in their browser. Most legal documents contain numbered sections, so these are a natural boundary to break on.

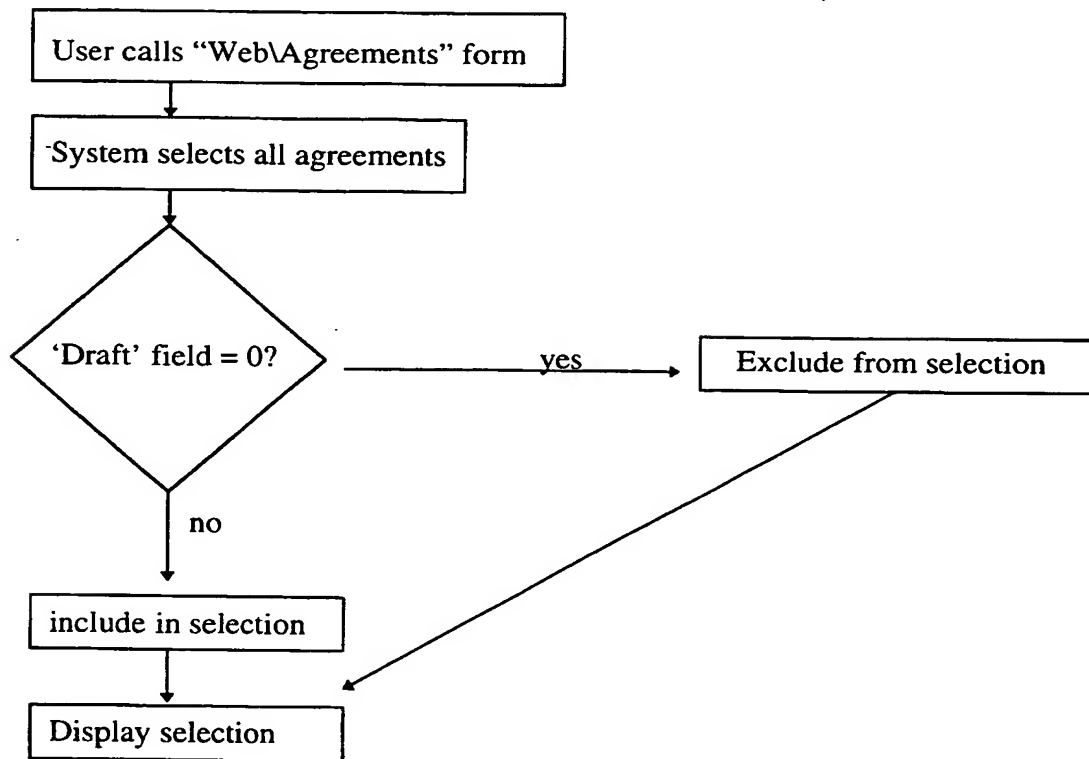
As each Agreement is broken into sections, some way to move between the sections (ie a "Next section" and "Previous section") function is needed. Because of the vagaries of @Command([NavigateNext]) and friends when used in Web applications, a more complex system is used. A scheduled (currently nightly) agent processes all Agreement documents. On each document, "NextUNID" and "PrevUNID" fields are created, containing the UNID of the Agreement document containing the next or previous section of this Agreement, respectively. If there is no next or no previous (ie first or last section), the corresponding field is set to the empty string. The contents of these fields is used to compute URL hotspots on the wAgreement form.

(c) Agreement views for Web clients (Standard Notes function.)

"Web\Agreements" displays Agreements to browser client users. The only notable thing about this view is that it's selection formula excludes Agreements with a value of "0" in the Draft field. The computed Readers field prevents browser users from seeing documents like this anyway, but without the exclusion in the view selection formula, the view could potentially show an empty category.

"Agreements" displays Agreements to Notes client users. The third column displays the document's UNID. This column is used in an @DBLookup formula on the Reckoner form.





3.2 Summaries

(a) Overview

The bulk of the information in a Summary is for display purposes only. The Summary form provides a number of fields to structure this information.

A typical Summary-Agreement pair will have a number of hyperlinks from portions of the Summary to the relevant parts of the Agreement. These hyperlinks are inserted using the normal Notes mechanism, but to assist the user in finding and opening the relevant Agreement, an action ("Agreements") is provided on the Summary form. This action displays a list of all sections of all Agreements on the system, and opens the selected Agreement section.

The Summary form also contains an action to create a new Key Date for the current Summary. This action composes a new Key Date document.

3.3 Key Dates

(a) Overview

A Key Date contains the date, description and other associated information relating to a significant date identified in an Agreement. Key Dates may have a fixed date, or may be a number of days after another Key Date.

Key Dates are associated with the Summary of the Agreement ... This association is implemented by making the Key Date document a response to the Summary document.

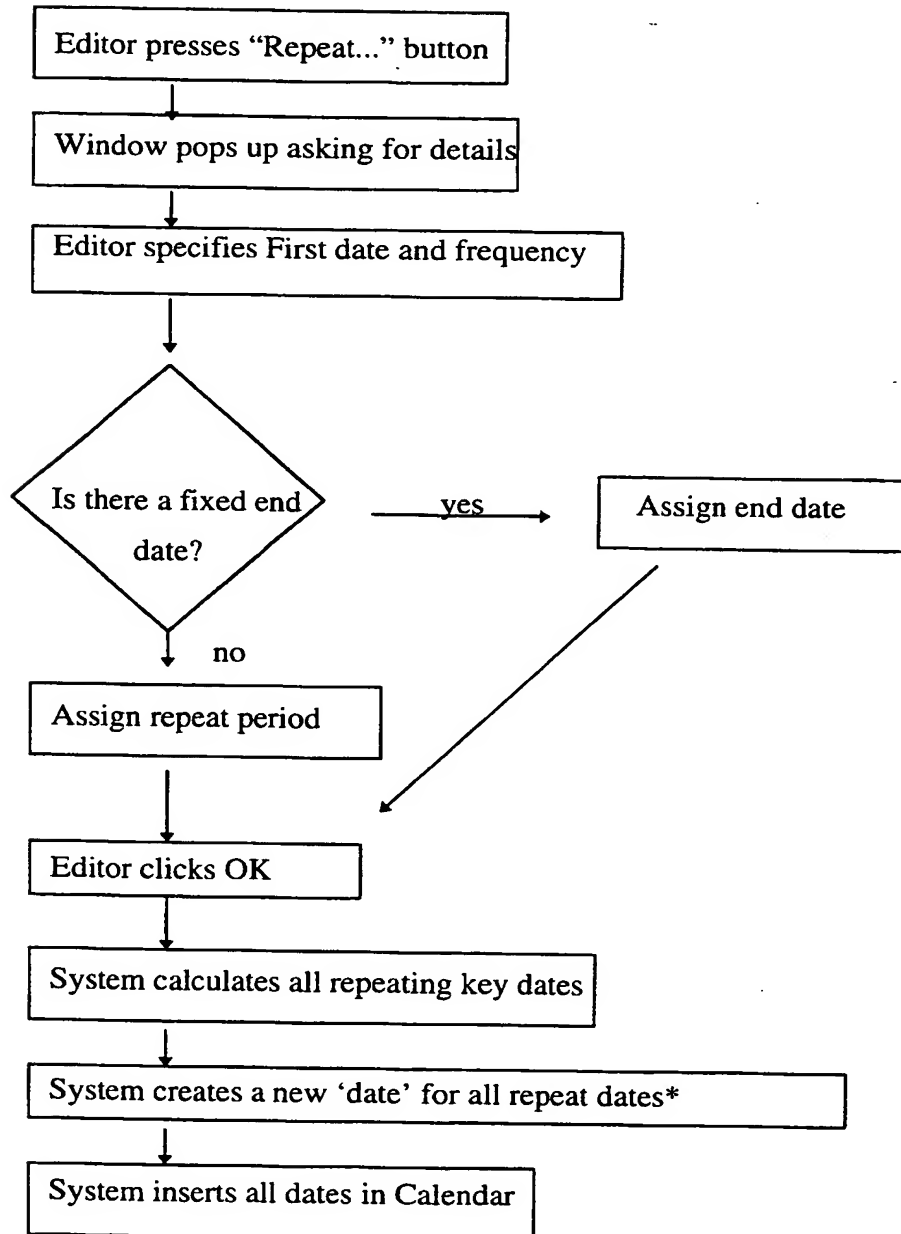
(b) Security

The security of each Key Date cannot be modified directly. Instead, it is controlled by the security of the associated Summary.

(c) Repeating key dates

Many significant dates identified in Agreements are of a repeating nature (eg a monthly payment, or an annual report). Each Key Date can occur on any number of arbitrary dates.

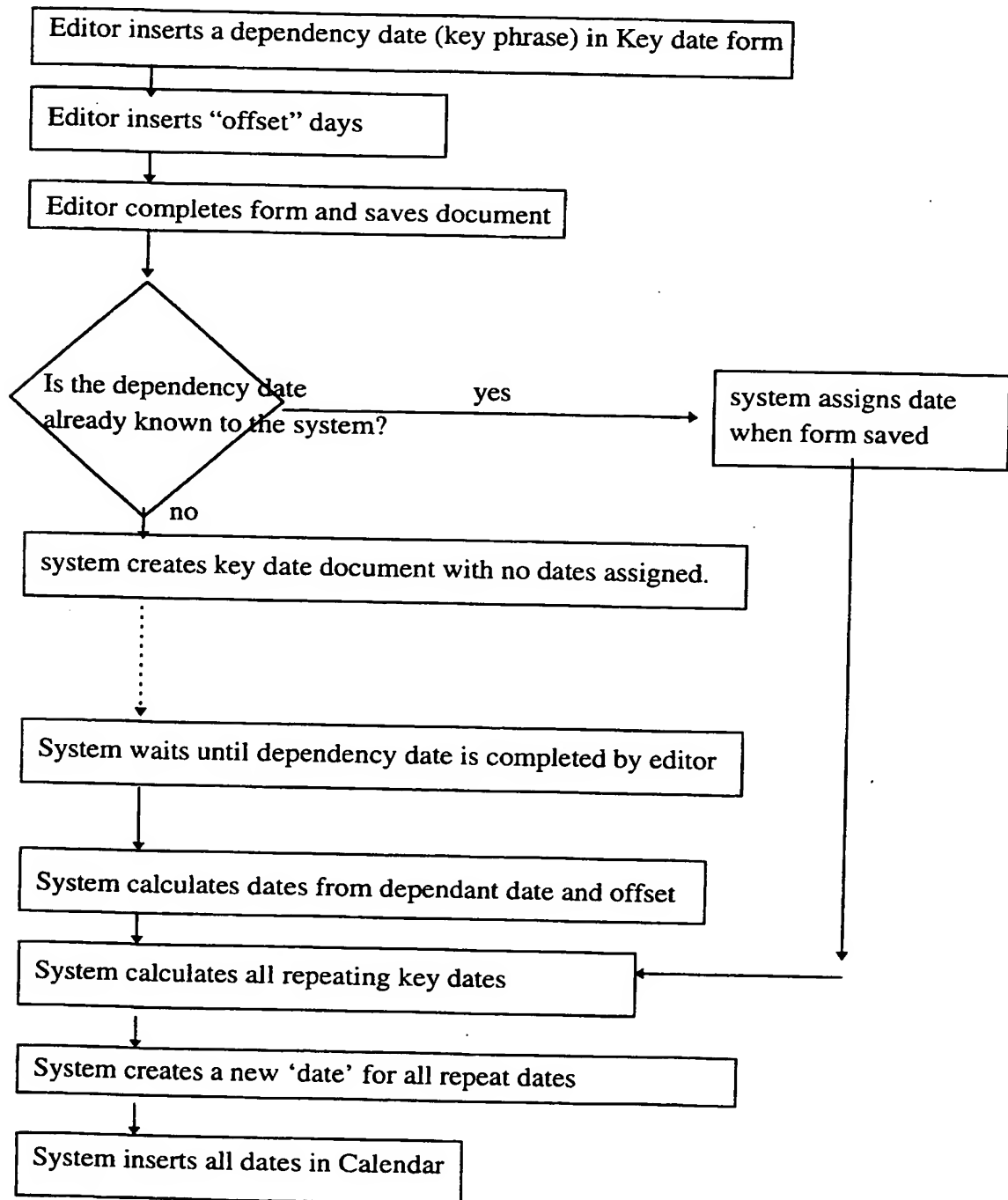
To simplify the entry of a Key Date which may repeat frequently (eg every month for 5 years), the Key Date form contains an action which automatically generates a series of dates. The user specifies the first date on which the Key Date occurs, the frequency (in days or months) at which the Key Date occurs, and either the last such date or the number of times the Key Date should repeat.



*Only one Key Date document is created, regardless of the number of repeat occurrences of that date. The purpose of the function is to remove the need for the editor to manually calculate and enter each repeating occurrence of a given Key Date.

(d) Dependant key dates

As described above, the exact date of particular Key Date may not be known, but it may be known that the date is some fixed period after another Key Date. The system allows the user to select another Key Date on which the current Key Date depends, and specify the number of days after the selected Key Date the current date occurs.



3.4 Glossary

The Glossary is a collection of terms that occur in the various Summaries and Agreements and their definitions for the purposes of those documents.

The Glossary section of the system allows the user to browse through all Glossary entries, but the primary way for the user to access a Glossary entry is via hyperlinks in Summaries or Agreements.

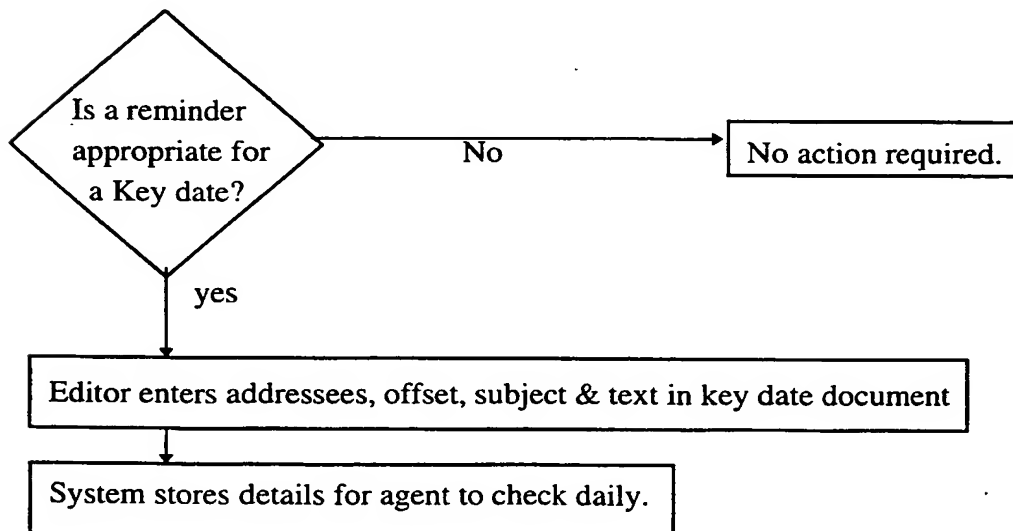
4 Reminders

4.1 Overview

An important aspect of the system is the reminder function, which provides advance warning of impending Key Dates to nominated people. This is achieved by sending said people an email a specified number of days prior to the Key Date occurring.

For a Key Date requiring reminders be sent, the user enters these details in the Key Date document:

- Email address(es) the reminder will be sent to.
- The reminder *offset*, ie the number of days before the Key Date occurs that the reminder will be sent. Multiple offsets may be entered, in which case multiple reminders will be sent, one per offset. An offset may be any positive integer, or 0, in which case the reminder is sent on the date of the Key Date.
- The subject of the email
- The text of the email. The system will prepend the description of the key date, and the offset to this text.



4.2 Sending reminders

A Notes agent is scheduled to run on a daily basis, usually at early morning so reminders are delivered before the start of the business day. The agent iterates over all Key Dates, and creates and sends emails for those when a reminder is due to be sent.

5 The Web Interface

5.1 Introduction

Non-editor users of the system (ie the client) access the system by a web browser client ("browser"). This sections describes the components of the system that constitute the interface to the browser.

5.2 Interface structure

In order to provide an effective interface, the system contains a number of components which generate a customised interface.

(a) Framesets

The interface is based around a 3 or 4-frame frameset, the structure of which is shown in Figure 1 and Figure 2. The frameset displayed depends on which section of the system is currently being used. The 3 frame frameset is used for the Home, Advices, Agreements, Glossary, Contacts and Search sections. The 4 frame frameset is used for the Summaries and Planner sections.

The frames that make up the 2 different framesets are described in the next section.

(b) Frames

The Navigation frame contains links to the various sections of the system. It also contains title information (company logos and the title of the system).

The Content frame displays the main content of whatever section of the system is currently in use. For example, when in the Summaries section, the Content frame displays a list of Summaries. When viewing an Agreement, the Content frame shows the text of the Agreement.

The Title frame, when present, displays the title of the information in the Content frame. This may be a general title (eg "Planner" when displaying the Monthly Planner), or a more specific one (eg "Agency Agreement (Summary)" when displaying the Summary for the Agency Agreement or "Project Agreement (Key Date) when" displaying a Key Date related to the Project Agreement).

The Sub-navigation frame displays links to allow navigation within the information currently displayed in the Content frame. This allows the user to easily navigate to major headings within this information, regardless of the information's length. For example, when viewing a Summary, the Sub-navigation frame display links which navigate to the top of the Summary, and to the Categories, Breach events, Breach consequences, Freehills Advices and Key Dates sub-headings

5.3 Interface implementation

Framesets and other navigation content is stored in Notes documents. This allows maintenance or changes to the web interface without requiring changes in the design of the Notes database.

(a) Framesets

The Frameset\2 frame and Frameset\3 frame forms allow the user to enter the details of the frameset, such as row/column height, and the name and content of the constituent frames. A field on the form computes the appropriate HTML to generate the frameset specified, which is displayed when the frameset document is viewed from a browser client.

(b) Other elements

The system contains some content which is used only to build the interface, such as the title information and links in the Navigation frame, and some of the content displayed in the Sub-navigation frame.

5.4 Interface details

(a) Monthly Calendar/Checklist

The Monthly Calendar uses a standard Notes calendar view to display all Key Dates in a calendar format. The calendar format is fixed to display 1 month at a time.

The Monthly Checklist function presents the user with a form where they may select the month and year the system should report on. Submitting this form causes the system to run a Notes agent, which queries the database to find all Key Dates in the requested month.

(b) Searching

The search function display a form (implemented in the Notes form "wSearch") where the user may select the search scope (any combination of Summaries, Advices and Agreements) and search terms. Submitting the form causes the system to perform a full-text search and display the results. The formatting of the results is controlled by the Notes view "wSearch".

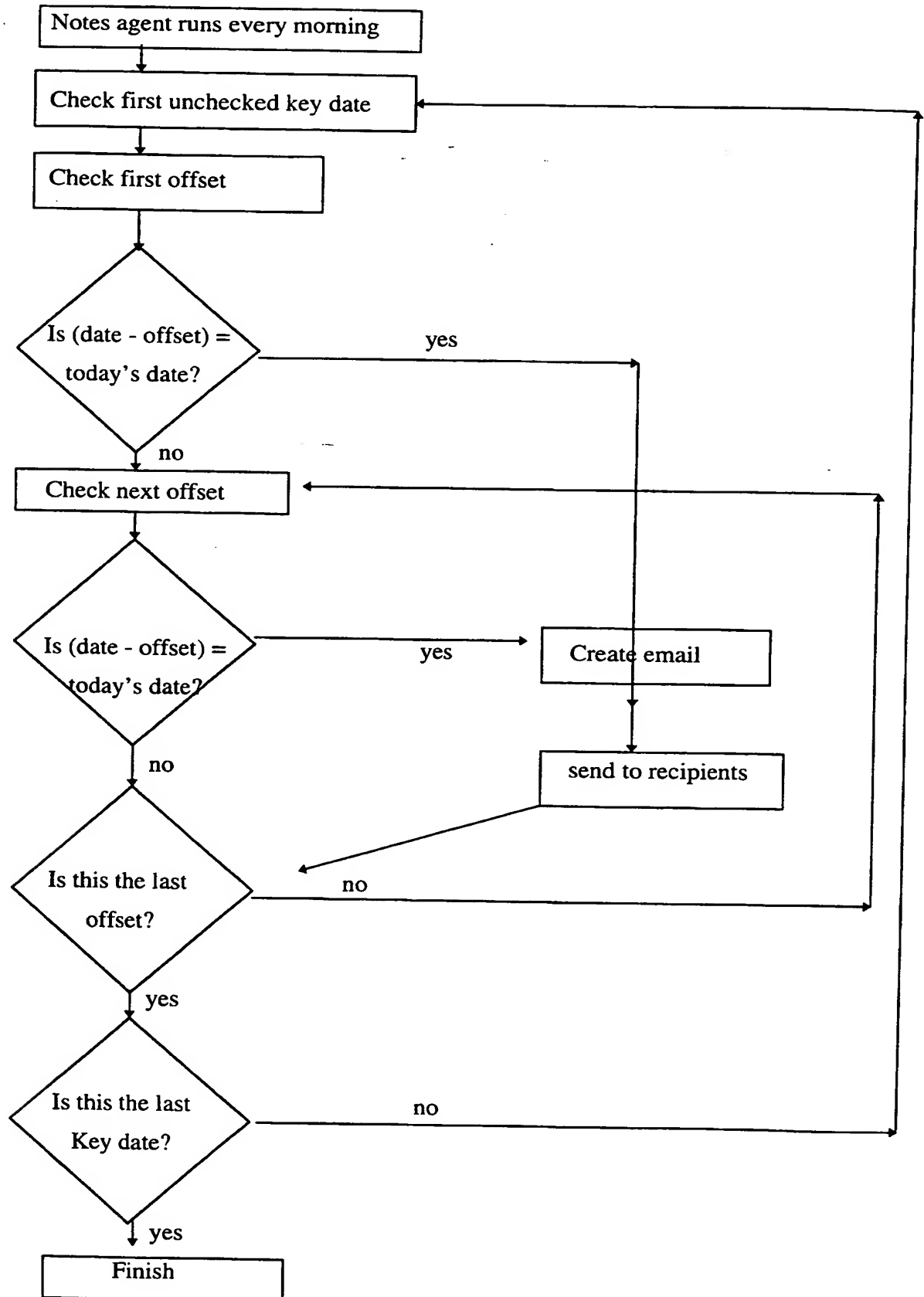
6 Editor processes

Publishing of final versions

Indexing

Translation to Web interface

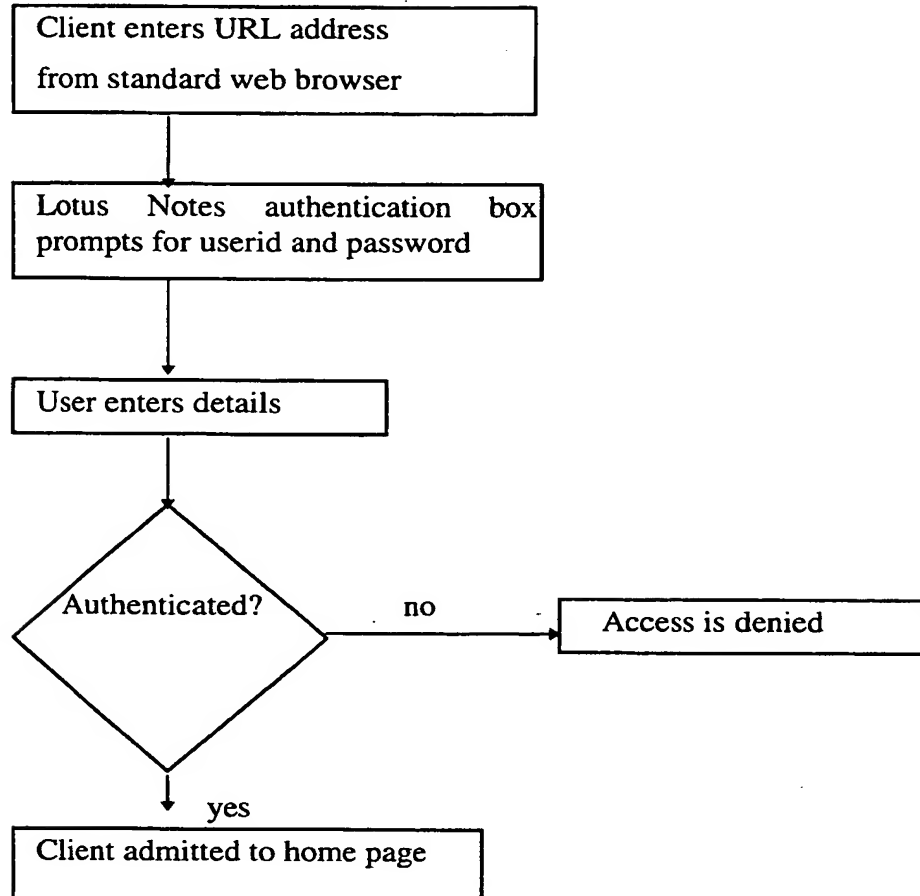
6.1 Sending reminders



7 The web interface

(Client processes)

7.1 System entry



7.2 Navigation components

Framesets

8 Administrator Processes

8.1 Navigation

All navigation is achieved using:

- Standard URL 'hotlinks'
- Standard Windows Scroll bars
- Notes "twisties" (operated from the browser interface)
- Custom programmed navigation - "next" and 'Previous' page hotlinks

8.2 Viewing/Browsing

All HTML text is viewed using the native browser display

Claims

1. An information management system able to assist with the management and monitoring of a multiplicity of documents containing rights and/or obligations including due dates, arising out of a plurality of primary documents, the system including:

a database adapted to store in an electronic and searchable format the plurality of primary documents;

an electronic diary system linked to the database which records at least selected due dates arising out of the primary documents;

access means for use in interrogating the database and diary system; and

display means for selectively displaying both details of the documents and the due dates.

2. An information management system according to claim 1, wherein said database is divided into sections, each section cross referenced to the others, the sections including:

at least a first section which incorporates summaries of each of the primary documents stored in said database;

a second section which incorporates the primary document themselves, and a third section which incorporates the defined terms in each of the primary documents.

3. An information management system according to claim 2, wherein said database further includes:

a fourth section of related documents in the form of advices, correspondence, annexures, contact details, or standard clauses, which relate to the primary documents.

4. An information management system according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein said database is sortable by a variety of predefined sort categories.

5. An information management system according to claim 1, wherein said electronic diary system records all due dates which arise out of the documents on which an action must be taken.

6. An electronic diary system according to claim 5, wherein said electronic diary system contains a means of notifying appropriate individuals prior to and/or on each due date.

7. An electronic diary system according to claims 5 or 6, wherein each diary entry includes a cross referencing facility such that each diary entry is cross referenced to the portion of the particular document which causes that diary entry to be generated.

8. An information management system according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein said information management system is accessible to one or more client users on a communications network.

9. An information management system according to claim 8, wherein said communications network includes the Internet, intranet, and local area network (LAN).

10. An information management system according to claims 8 or 9, wherein reminders generated by said information management system are forwarded via said communication network to individuals who take responsibility for carrying out the tasks to which the due dates relate.
11. An information management system according to claim 8, wherein said information management system can be updated, maintained or monitored by said client users over said communications network.
12. An information management system according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein said documents have a multiplicity of rights and/or obligations including due dates internal to said documents and distributed in different clauses spread throughout said documents.
13. An information management system according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein said documents have a multiplicity of rights and/or obligations including due dates external to said documents but which relate to the transaction of which said documents form a part.
14. A method for implementing an information management system able to assist with the management and monitoring of a multiplicity of documents containing rights and/or obligations including due dates arising out of a plurality of primary documents, said method including the steps of:
 - providing a database adapted to store in an electronic and searchable format the plurality of primary documents;
 - providing an electronic diary system linked to the database which records at least selected due dates arising out of the primary documents;
 - providing access means for use in interrogating the database and diary system; and providing display means for selectively displaying both details of the documents and the due dates.
15. A method according to claim 14, wherein said method provides a database which is divided into sections, each section cross referenced to the others, the sections including:
 - at least a first section which incorporates summaries of each of the primary documents stored in said database;
 - a second section which incorporates the primary document themselves, and a third section which incorporates the defined terms in each of the primary documents.
16. A method according to claim 14, wherein said method provides a database which further includes a fourth section of related documents in the form of advices, correspondence, annexures, contact details, or standard clauses, which relate to the primary documents.
17. A method according to any one of claims 14 to 16, wherein said database is sortable by a variety of predefined sort categories.
18. A method according to claim 14, wherein said electronic diary system records all due dates which arise out of the documents on which an action must be taken.
19. A method according to claim 18, wherein said electronic diary system contains a means of notifying appropriate individuals prior to and/or on each due date.

20. A method according to claims 18 or 19, wherein each diary entry includes a cross referencing facility such that each diary entry is cross referenced to the portion of the particular document which causes that diary entry to be generated.
21. A method of implementing an information management system according to claim 14 wherein said information management system is accessible to one or more client users on a communications network.
22. A method according to claim 21 wherein said communications network includes the Internet, intranet, and local area network (LAN).
23. A method according to claims 21 or 22, wherein reminders generated by said information management system are forwarded via said communication network to individuals who take responsibility for carrying out the tasks to which the due dates relate.
24. A method according to claim 21, wherein said information management system can be updated, maintained or monitored by said client users over said communications network.
25. A method according to any one of claims 14 to 24, wherein said method provides for access to documents having a multiplicity of rights and/or obligations including due dates internal to said documents and distributed in different clauses spread throughout said documents.
26. A method according to any one of claims 14 to 24, wherein said method provides for access to documents having a multiplicity of rights and/or obligations including due dates external to said documents but which relate to the transaction of which said documents form a part.
27. An information management system able to assist with the management and monitoring of a multiplicity of documents containing rights and/or obligations including due dates, arising out of a plurality of primary documents, substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to the accompanying drawings.
28. A method for implementing an information management system substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to the accompanying drawings.

Fig. 1

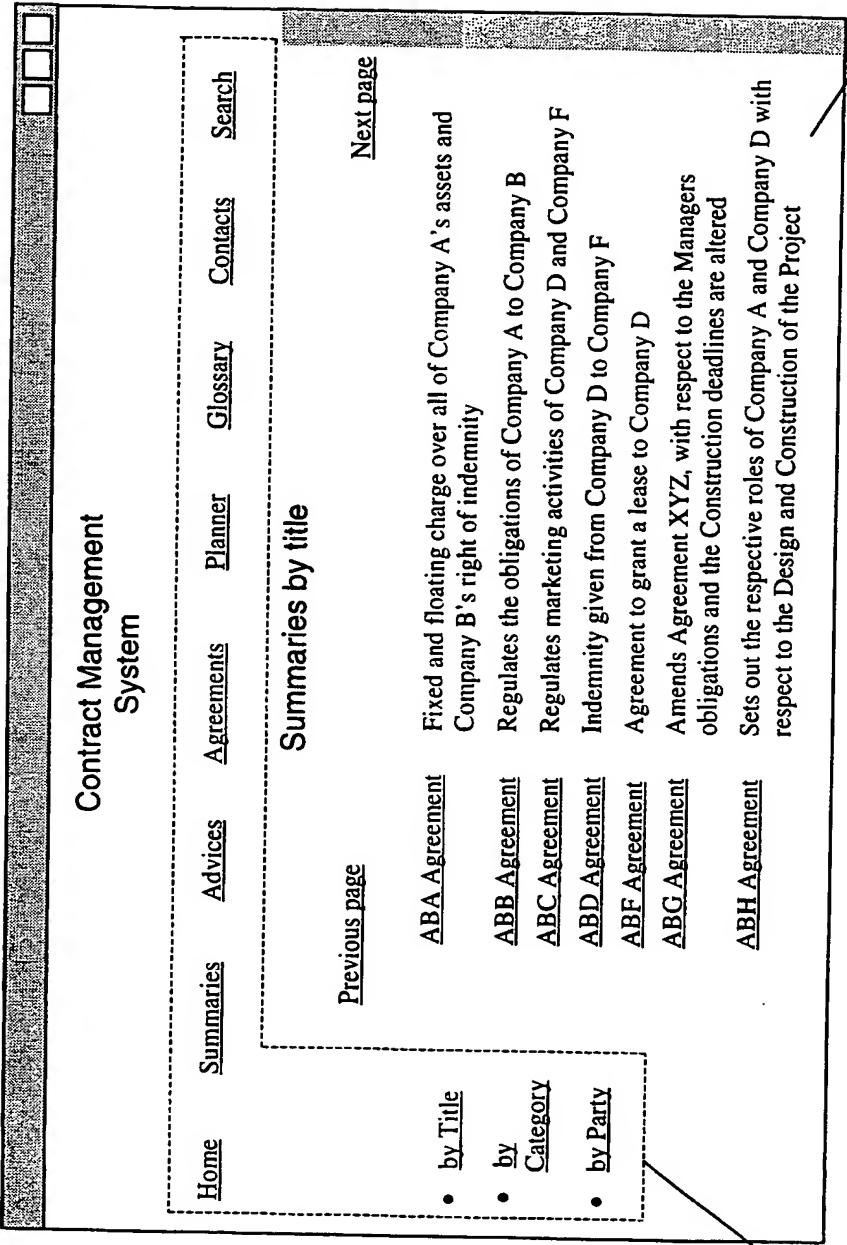
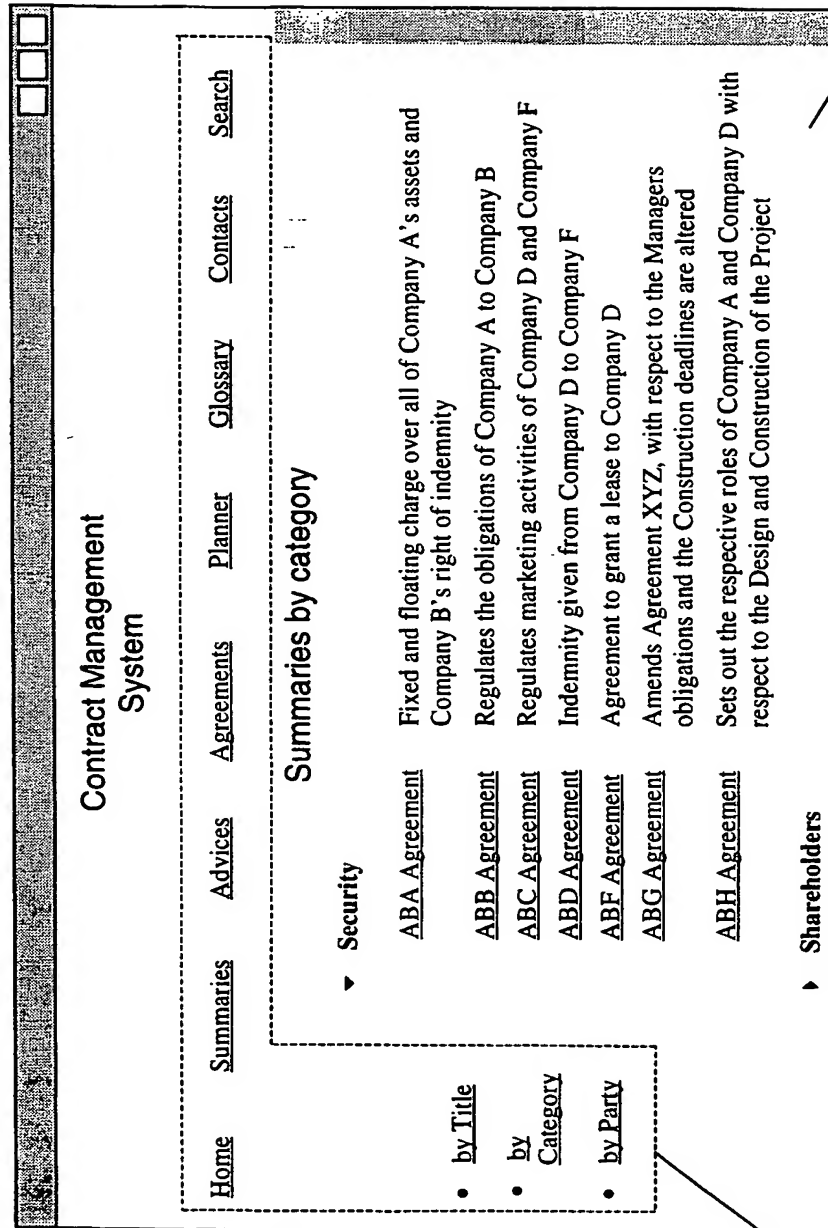


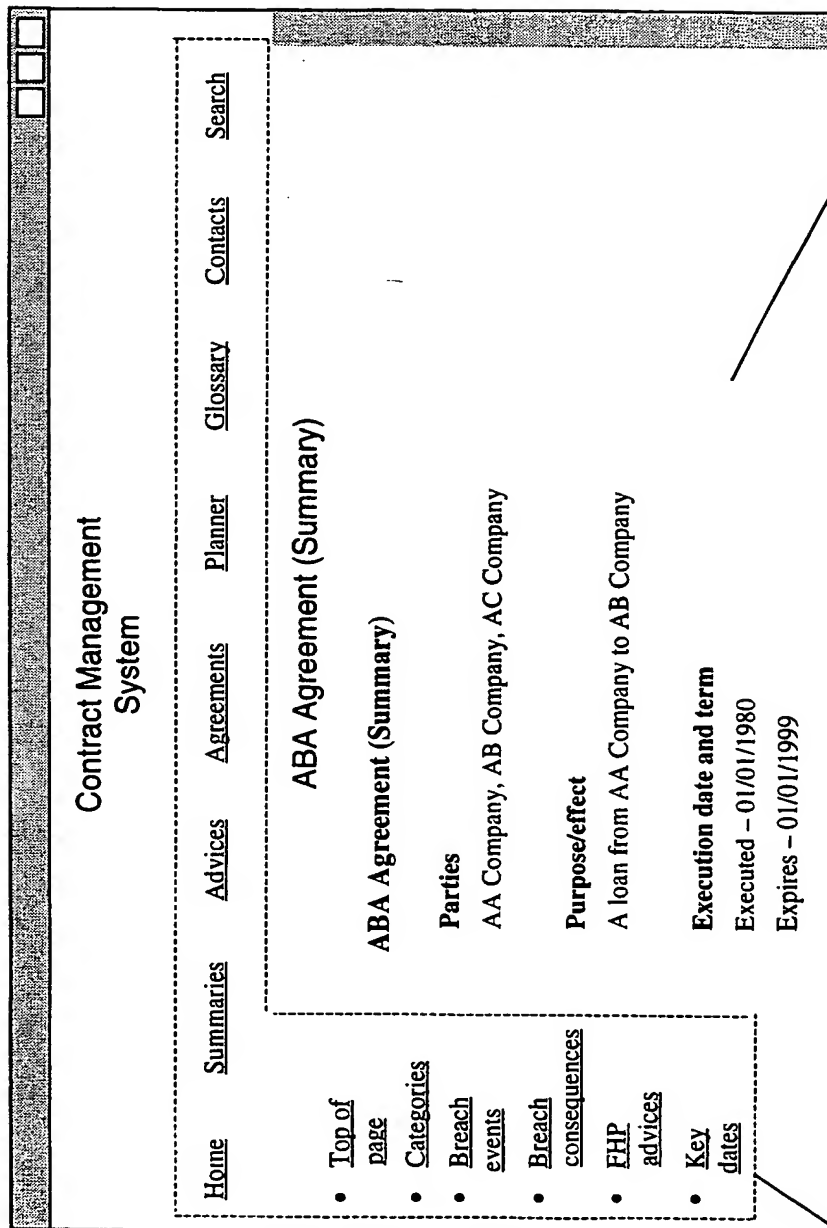
Fig. 2



10

12

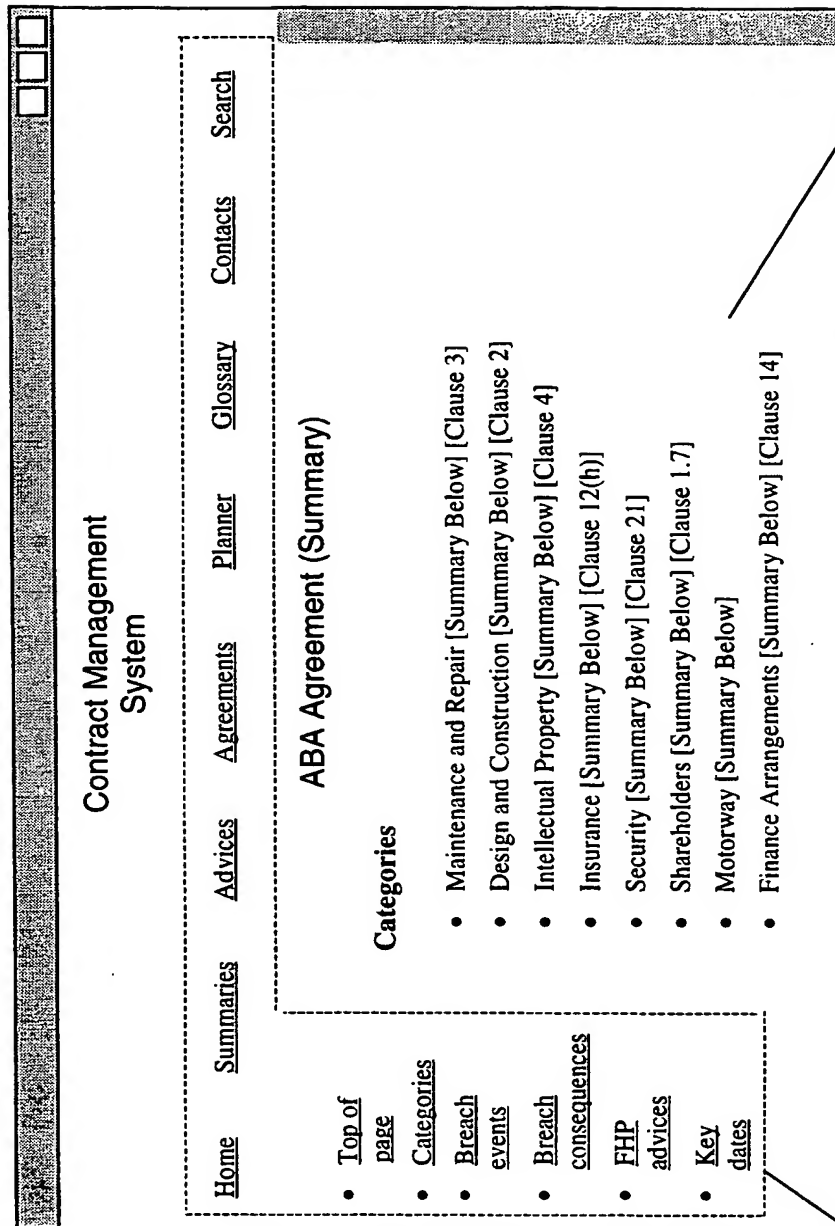
Fig. 3



12

10

Fig. 4



12

10

Fig. 5

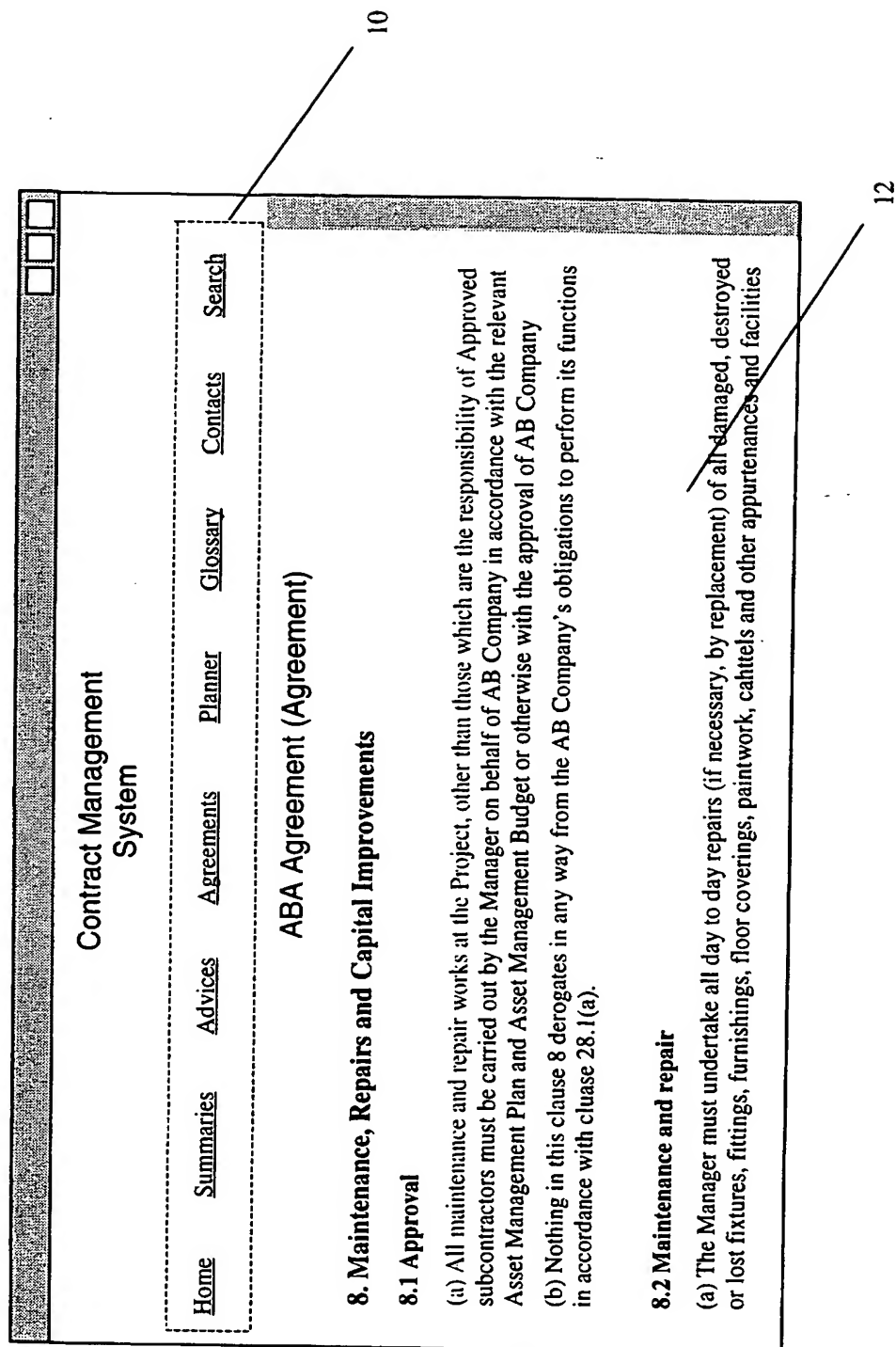


Fig. 6

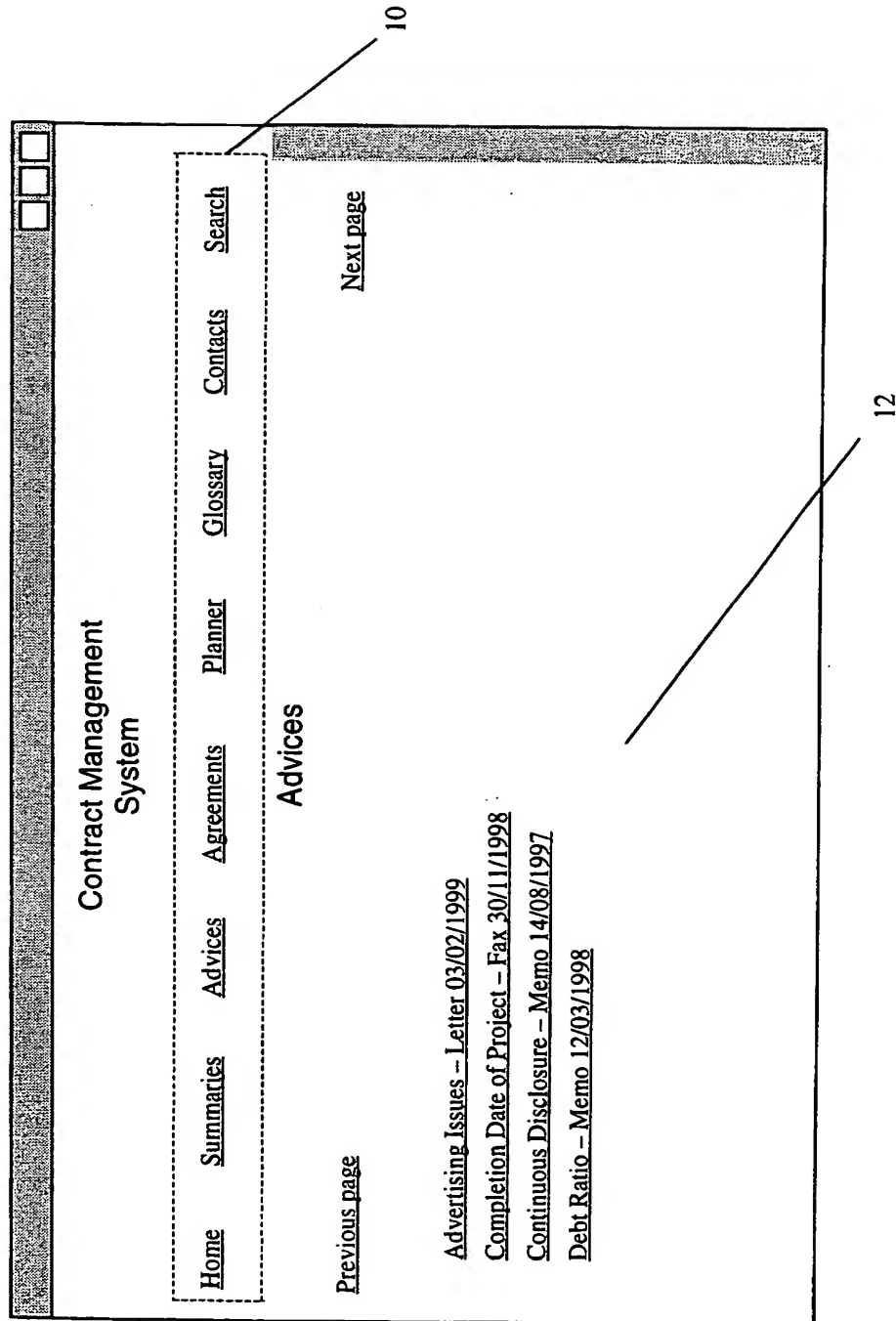


Fig. 7

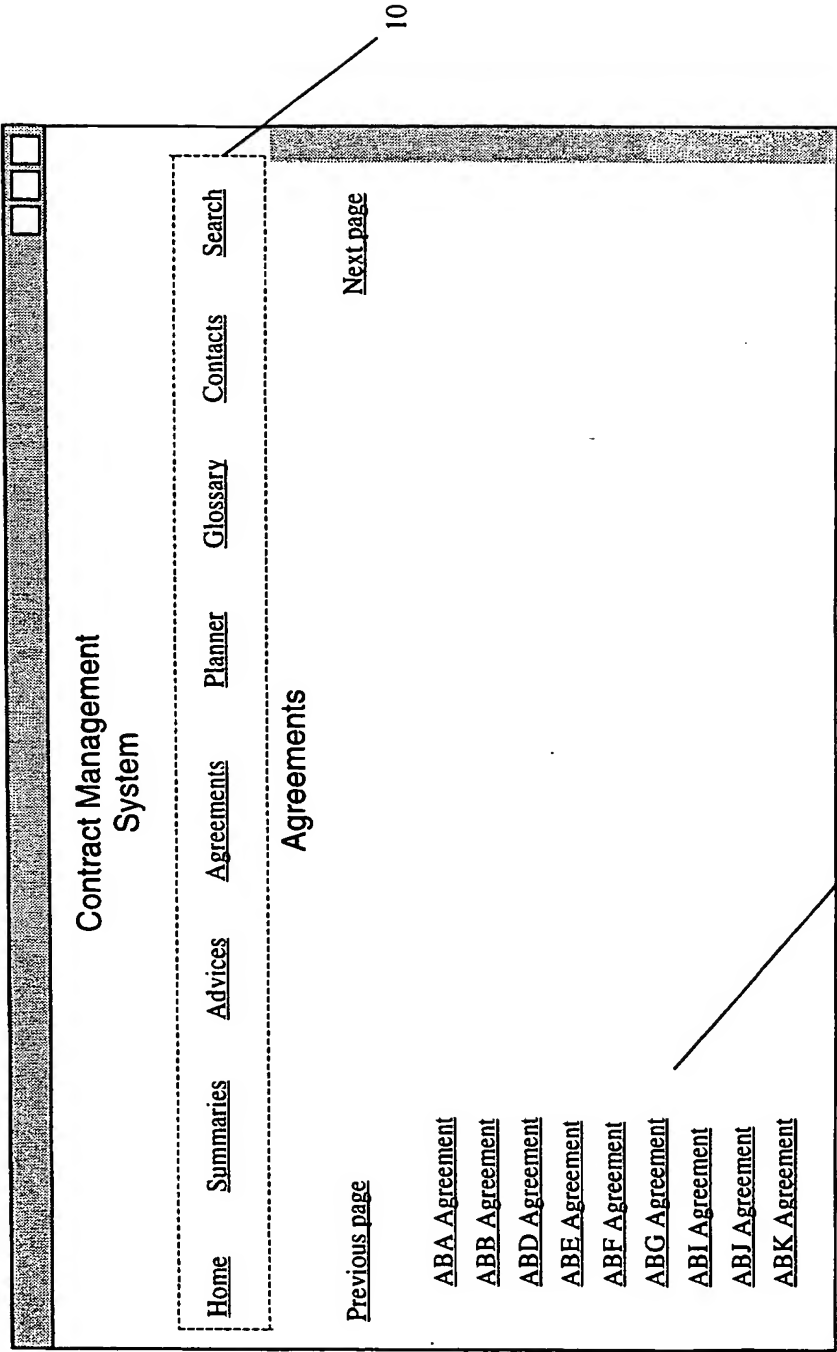


Fig. 8

Contract Management System

[Home](#) [Summaries](#) [Advices](#) [Agreements](#) [Planner](#) [Glossary](#) [Contacts](#) [Search](#)

Planner

[Back](#) [Forward](#)

January 1999

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
28	29	30	31	1 Company A to pr	2	3
4	5 Company A to pa	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18 BC Lease ex	19	20	21	22 Management meet	23	24

- [Monthly calendar](#)
- [Monthly checklist](#)

Fig. 9

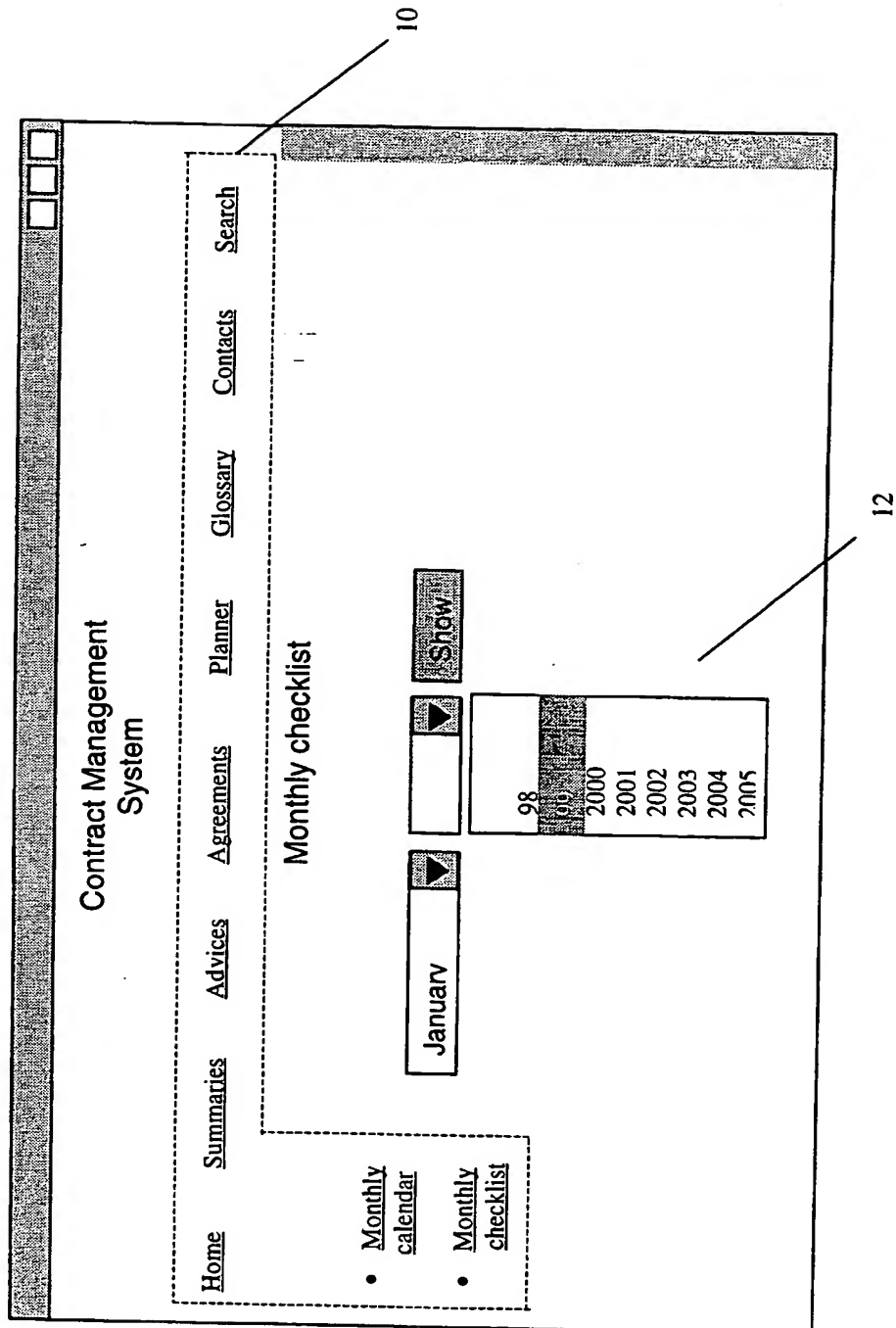


Fig. 10

The screenshot displays the 'Contract Management System' interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links: [Home](#), [Summaries](#), [Advices](#), [Agreements](#), [Planner](#), [Glossary](#), [Contacts](#), and [Search](#). Below this, a dashed box labeled '10' contains a 'Monthly checklist' section. This section includes a 'Monthly calendar' link, a date selector showing 'January' and '99', and a 'Show' button. To the right of the date selector is a table labeled '12' which lists tasks with their due dates and completion status.

Date	Description	Yes	No	Completed
01/01/1999	Company A to provide Operation and Maintenance Report	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A
05/01/1999	Company A to pay Monthly Management fee	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18/01/1999	BC Lease expires today	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22/01/1999	Management meeting must be held within 22 days of the end of the	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Fig. 11

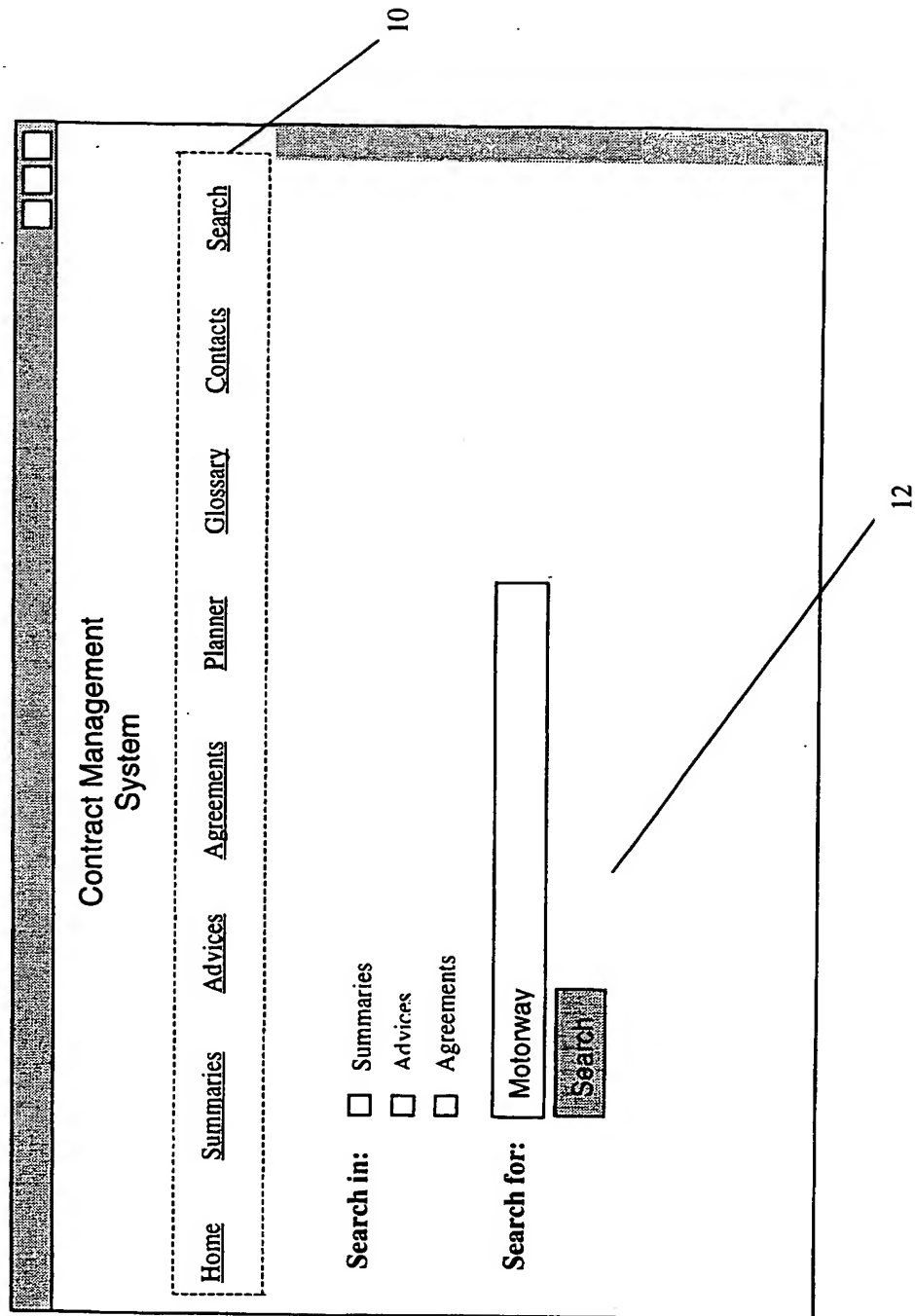


Fig. 12

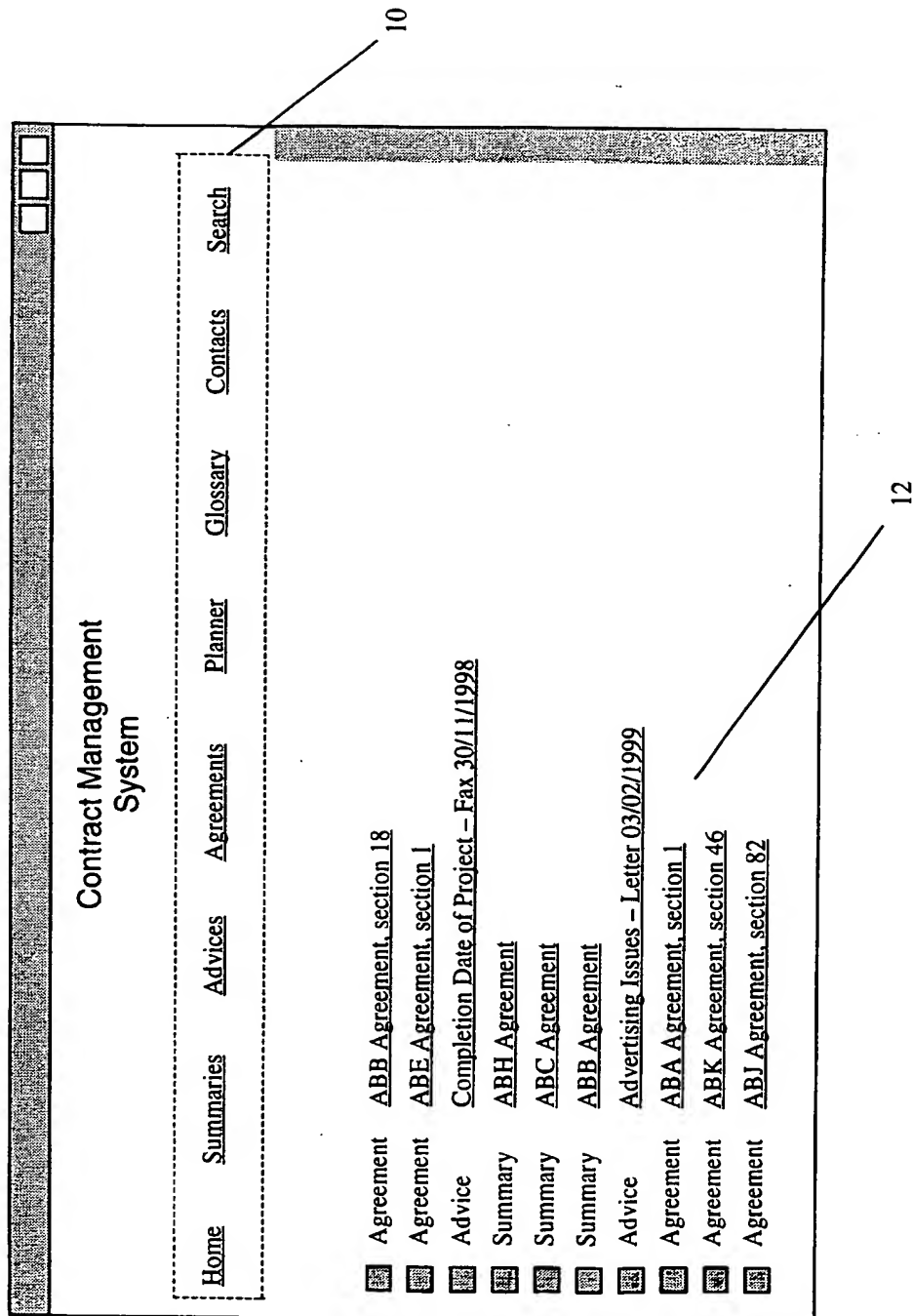
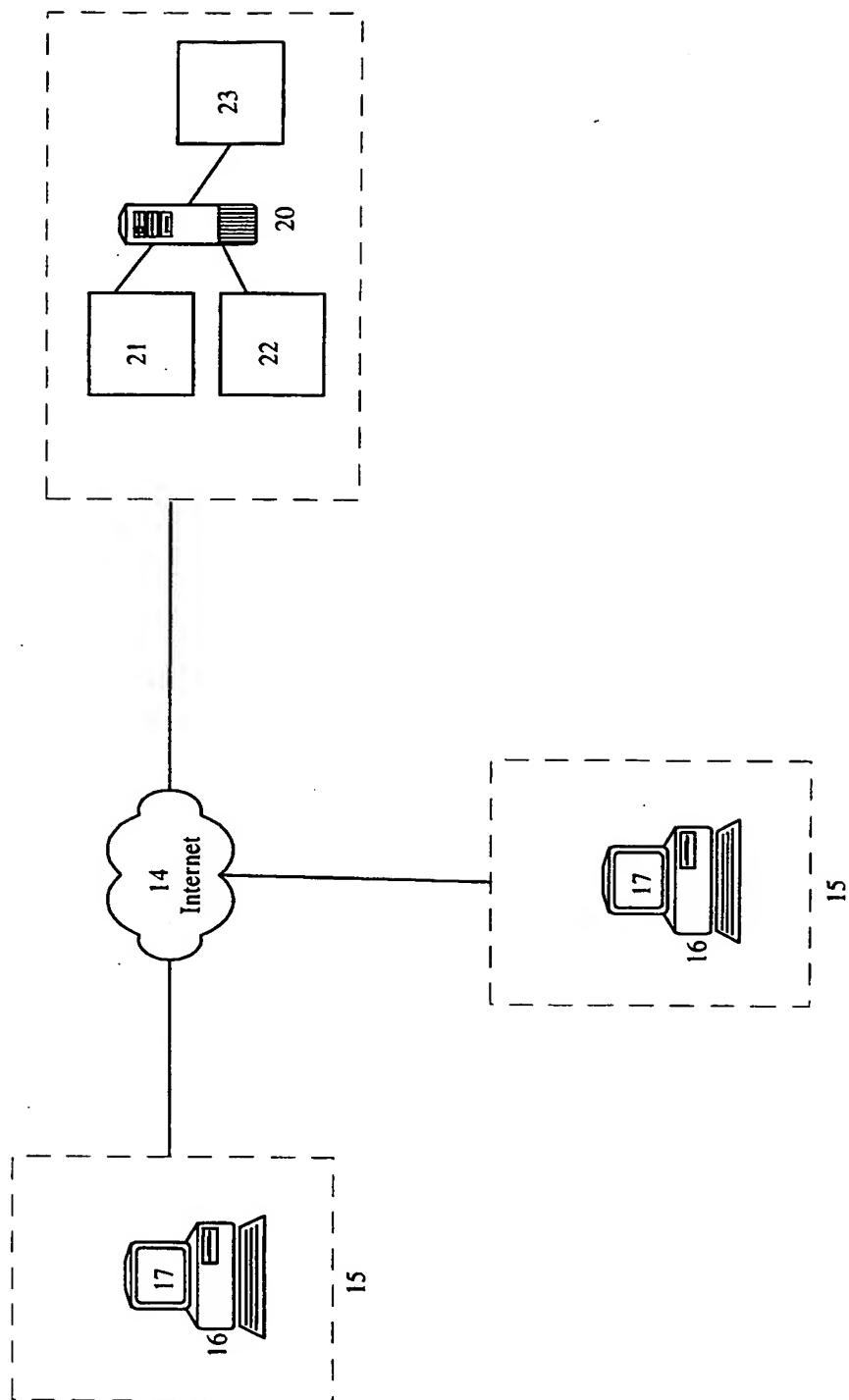


Fig. 13



INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/AU00/01017**A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER**Int. Cl. ⁷: G06F 17/60/

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHEDMinimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
G06F 17/60, 17/30, 15/21

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)
WPAT Keywords USPTO Keywords**C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT**

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	US, A, 5182705 (BARR et al) 26 January 1993 See whole document	1-28
X	US, A, 5557515 (ABBRUZZESE et al) 17 September 1996 See whole document	1-28

☐ Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C ☐ See patent family annex

* Special categories of cited documents:

"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance
"E" earlier application or patent but published on or after the international filing date
"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)
"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means
"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention
"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone
"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art
"&" document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search

2 November 2000

Date of mailing of the international search report

- 9 NOV 2000

Name and mailing address of the ISA/AU

AUSTRALIAN PATENT OFFICE
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Facsimile No. (02) 6285 3929

Authorized officer

Stephen Lee
Telephone No : (02) 6283 2205

PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

From the:
INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINING AUTHORITY


To: FREEHILLS CARTER SMITH & BEADLE MLC Centre Martin Place SYDNEY NSW 2000		PCT NOTIFICATION OF TRANSMITTAL OF INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT (PCT Rule 71.1)	
		FREEHILLS CARTER SMITH BEADLE	
		Received: 4 APR 2001	
		Date of mailing: 03 APR 2001	
		Seen by: <i>hcy</i> day <i>1</i> month <i>12</i> year <i>PL</i>	
Applicant's or agent's file reference 2188781		Entered By: <i>30</i> IMPORTANT NOTIFICATION	
International Application No. PCT/AU00/01017		International Filing Date 28 August 2000	
Priority Date 27 August 1999			
Applicant FHP AUSTRALIA PTY LTD et al			

1. The applicant is hereby notified that this International Preliminary Examining Authority transmits herewith the international preliminary examination report and its annexes, if any, established on the international application.
2. A copy of the report and its annexes, if any, is being transmitted to the International Bureau for communication to all the elected Offices.
3. Where required by any of the elected Offices, the International Bureau will prepare an English translation of the report (but not of any annexes) and will transmit such translations to those Offices.
4. **REMINDER**

 The applicant must enter the national phase before each elected Office by performing certain acts (filing translations and paying national fees) within 30 months from the priority date (or later in some Offices)(Article 39(1))(see also the reminder sent by the International Bureau with Form PCT/IB/301).

 Where a translation of the international application must be furnished to an elected Office, that translation must contain a translation of any annexes to the international preliminary examination report. It is the applicant's responsibility to prepare and furnish such translation directly to each elected Office concerned.

 For further details on the applicable time limits and requirements of the elected Offices, see Volume II of the PCT Applicant's Guide

Name and mailing address of the IPEA/AU AUSTRALIAN PATENT OFFICE PO BOX 200, WODEN ACT 2606, AUSTRALIA E-mail address: pct@ipaaustralia.gov.au Facsimile No. (02) 6285 3929	Authorized officer <div style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em;">  </div> Stephen Lee Telephone No. (02) 6283 2205
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INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION TREATY
PCT
INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT
(PCT Article 36 and Rule 70)

Applicant's or agent's file reference 2188781	FOR FURTHER ACTION	See Notification of Transmittal of International Preliminary Examination Report (Form PCT/IPEA/416).
International Application No. PCT/AU00/01017	International Filing Date (<i>day/month/year</i>) 28 August 2000	Priority Date (<i>day/month/year</i>) 27 August 1999
International Patent Classification (IPC) or national classification and IPC Int. Cl. ⁷ G06F 17/60		
Applicant FHP AUSTRALIA PTY LTD et al		

This international preliminary examination report has been prepared by this International Preliminary Examining Authority and is transmitted to the applicant according to Article 36.


2. This REPORT consists of a total of 3 sheets, including this cover sheet.

☒ This report is also accompanied by ANNEXES, i.e., sheets of the description, claims and/or drawings which have been amended and are the basis for this report and/or sheets containing rectifications made before this Authority (see Rule 70.16 and Section 607 of the Administrative Instructions under the PCT).

These annexes consist of a total of 7 sheet(s).

3. This report contains indications relating to the following items:

I	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Basis of the report
II	<input type="checkbox"/>	Priority
III	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-establishment of opinion with regard to novelty, inventive step and industrial applicability
IV	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lack of unity of invention
V	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement
VI	<input type="checkbox"/>	Certain documents cited
VII	<input type="checkbox"/>	Certain defects in the international application
VIII	<input type="checkbox"/>	Certain observations on the international application

Date of submission of the demand 25 January 2001	Date of completion of the report 28 March 2001
Name and mailing address of the IPEA/AU AUSTRALIAN PATENT OFFICE PO BOX 200, WODEN ACT 2606, AUSTRALIA E-mail address: pct@ipaaustralia.gov.au Facsimile No. (02) 6285 3929	Authorized Officer  Stephen Lee Telephone No. (02) 6283 2205

I. Basis of the report**1. With regard to the elements of the international application:***

- ☐ the international application as originally filed.
- ☒ the description, pages **1,4-19** as originally filed,
pages , filed with the demand,
pages **2-3a**, received on **16 March 2001** with the letter of **16 March 2001**
- ☒ the claims, pages , as originally filed,
pages , as amended (together with any statement) under Article 19,
pages , filed with the demand,
pages **20-22a**, received on **16 March 2001** with the letter of **16 March 2001**
- ☒ the drawings, pages **1-13**, as originally filed,
pages , filed with the demand,
pages , received on with the letter of
- ☐ the sequence listing part of the description:
pages , as originally filed
pages , filed with the demand
pages , received on with the letter of

2. With regard to the language, all the elements marked above were available or furnished to this Authority in the language in which the international application was filed, unless otherwise indicated under this item.

These elements were available or furnished to this Authority in the following language which is:

- ☐ the language of a translation furnished for the purposes of international search (under Rule 23.1(b)).
- ☐ the language of publication of the international application (under Rule 48.3(b)).
- ☐ the language of the translation furnished for the purposes of international preliminary examination (under Rules 55.2 and/or 55.3).

3. With regard to any nucleotide and/or amino acid sequence disclosed in the international application, was on the basis of the sequence listing:

- ☐ contained in the international application in written form.
- ☐ filed together with the international application in computer readable form.
- ☐ furnished subsequently to this Authority in written form.
- ☐ furnished subsequently to this Authority in computer readable form.
- ☐ The statement that the subsequently furnished written sequence listing does not go beyond the disclosure in the international application as filed has been furnished.
- ☐ The statement that the information recorded in computer readable form is identical to the written sequence listing has been furnished

4. ☐ The amendments have resulted in the cancellation of:

- ☐ the description, pages
- ☐ the claims, Nos.
- ☐ the drawings, sheets/fig.

5. ☐ This report has been established as if (some of) the amendments had not been made, since they have been considered to go beyond the disclosure as filed, as indicated in the Supplemental Box (Rule 70.2(c)).**

* Replacement sheets which have been furnished to the receiving Office in response to an invitation under Article 14 are referred to in this report as "originally filed" and are not annexed to this report since they do not contain amendments (Rules 70.16 and 70.17).

** Any replacement sheet containing such amendments must be referred to under item 1 and annexed to this report

V. Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement**1. Statement**

Novelty (N)	Claims 1-28	YES
	Claims	NO
Inventive step (IS)	Claims 1-28	YES
	Claims	NO
Industrial applicability (IA)	Claims 1-28	YES
	Claims	NO

2. Citations and explanations (Rule 70.7)

Novelty and Inventive Step Claims 1-28

US 5182705

US 5557515

None of the citations either individually or in obvious combination disclose the invention of the above claims.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION TREATY
PCT
INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT
(PCT Article 36 and Rule 70)

Applicant's or agent's file reference 2188781	FOR FURTHER ACTION	See Notification of Transmittal of International Preliminary Examination Report (Form PCT/IPEA/416).
International Application No. PCT/AU00/01017	International Filing Date (<i>day/month/year</i>) 28 August 2000	Priority Date (<i>day/month/year</i>) 27 August 1999
International Patent Classification (IPC) or national classification and IPC Int. Cl. ⁷ G06F 17/60		
Applicant FHP AUSTRALIA PTY LTD et al		

This international preliminary examination report has been prepared by this International Preliminary Examining Authority and is transmitted to the applicant according to Article 36.


2. This REPORT consists of a total of 3 sheets, including this cover sheet.

☒ This report is also accompanied by ANNEXES, i.e., sheets of the description, claims and/or drawings which have been amended and are the basis for this report and/or sheets containing rectifications made before this Authority (see Rule 70.16 and Section 607 of the Administrative Instructions under the PCT).

These annexes consist of a total of 7 sheet(s).

3. This report contains indications relating to the following items:

I	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Basis of the report
II	<input type="checkbox"/>	Priority
III	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-establishment of opinion with regard to novelty, inventive step and industrial applicability
IV	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lack of unity of invention
V	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement
VI	<input type="checkbox"/>	Certain documents cited
VII	<input type="checkbox"/>	Certain defects in the international application
VIII	<input type="checkbox"/>	Certain observations on the international application

Date of submission of the demand 25 January 2001	Date of completion of the report 28 March 2001
Name and mailing address of the IPEA/AU AUSTRALIAN PATENT OFFICE PO BOX 200, WODEN ACT 2606, AUSTRALIA E-mail address: pct@ipaaustralia.gov.au Facsimile No. (02) 6285 3929	Authorized Officer  Stephen Lee Telephone No. (02) 6283 2205

I. Basis of the report

1. With regard to the elements of the international application:*
- ☐ the international application as originally filed.
- ☒ the description, pages 1,4-19 as originally filed,
pages , filed with the demand,
pages 2-3a, received on 16 March 2001 with the letter of 16 March 2001
- ☒ the claims, pages , as originally filed,
pages , as amended (together with any statement) under Article 19,
pages , filed with the demand,
pages 20-22a, received on 16 March 2001 with the letter of 16 March 2001
- ☒ the drawings, pages 1-13, as originally filed,
pages , filed with the demand,
pages , received on with the letter of
- ☐ the sequence listing part of the description:
pages , as originally filed
pages , filed with the demand
pages , received on with the letter of
2. With regard to the language, all the elements marked above were available or furnished to this Authority in the language in which the international application was filed, unless otherwise indicated under this item.
These elements were available or furnished to this Authority in the following language which is:
- ☐ the language of a translation furnished for the purposes of international search (under Rule 23.1(b)).
- ☐ the language of publication of the international application (under Rule 48.3(b)).
- ☐ the language of the translation furnished for the purposes of international preliminary examination (under Rules 55.2 and/or 55.3).
3. With regard to any nucleotide and/or amino acid sequence disclosed in the international application, was on the basis of the sequence listing:
- ☐ contained in the international application in written form.
- ☐ filed together with the international application in computer readable form.
- ☐ furnished subsequently to this Authority in written form.
- ☐ furnished subsequently to this Authority in computer readable form.
- ☐ The statement that the subsequently furnished written sequence listing does not go beyond the disclosure in the international application as filed has been furnished.
- ☐ The statement that the information recorded in computer readable form is identical to the written sequence listing has been furnished
4. ☐ The amendments have resulted in the cancellation of:
- ☐ the description, pages
- ☐ the claims, Nos.
- ☐ the drawings, sheets/fig.
5. ☐ This report has been established as if (some of) the amendments had not been made, since they have been considered to go beyond the disclosure as filed, as indicated in the Supplemental Box (Rule 70.2(c)).**

* Replacement sheets which have been furnished to the receiving Office in response to an invitation under Article 14 are referred to in this report as "originally filed" and are not annexed to this report since they do not contain amendments (Rules 70.16 and 70.17).

** Any replacement sheet containing such amendments must be referred to under item 1 and annexed to this report

V. Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement**1. Statement**

Novelty (N)	Claims 1-28	YES
	Claims	NO
Inventive step (IS)	Claims 1-28	YES
	Claims	NO
Industrial applicability (IA)	Claims 1-28	YES
	Claims	NO

2. Citations and explanations (Rule 70.7)

Novelty and Inventive Step Claims 1-28

US 5182705

US 5557515

None of the citations either individually or in obvious combination disclose the invention of the above claims.

PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

From the:
INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINING AUTHORITY

To: FREEHILLS CARTER SMITH & BEADLE MLC Centre Martin Place SYDNEY NSW 2000	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td colspan="2" style="text-align: center;">FREEHILLS CARTER SMITH & BEADLE</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">Received:</td> <td style="width: 50%;">14 FEB 2001</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Seen by:</td> <td>For:</td> </tr> <tr> <td>De ma?</td> <td>Date of mailing:</td> </tr> </table>	FREEHILLS CARTER SMITH & BEADLE		Received:	14 FEB 2001	Seen by:	For:	De ma?	Date of mailing:	PCT WRITTEN OPINION (PCT Rule 66)
FREEHILLS CARTER SMITH & BEADLE										
Received:	14 FEB 2001									
Seen by:	For:									
De ma?	Date of mailing:									
Applicant's or agent's file reference 2188781		REPLY DUE within TWO MONTHS from the above date of mailing								
International Application No. PCT/AU00/01017	International Filing Date (day/month/year) 28 August 2000	Priority Date (day/month/year) 27 August 1999								
International Patent Classification (IPC) or both national classification and IPC Int. Cl. ⁷ G06F 17/60										
Applicant FHP AUSTRALIA PTY LTD et al										

1. This written opinion is the **first** drawn by this International Preliminary Examining Authority.
2. This opinion contains indications relating to the following items:

I	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Basis of the opinion
II	<input type="checkbox"/>	Priority
III	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-establishment of opinion with regard to novelty, inventive step and industrial applicability
IV	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lack of unity of invention
V	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Reasoned statement under Rule 66.2(a)(ii) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement
VI	<input type="checkbox"/>	Certain documents cited
VII	<input type="checkbox"/>	Certain defects in the international application
VIII	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Certain observations on the international application

The applicant is hereby **invited to reply** to this opinion.

When? See the time limit indicated above. The applicant may, before the expiration of that time limit, request this Authority to grant an extension, see Rule 66.2(d).

How? By submitting a written reply, accompanied, where appropriate, by amendments, according to Rule 66.3. For the form and the language of the amendments, see Rules 66.8 and 66.9.

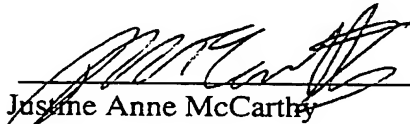
Also For an additional opportunity to submit amendments, see Rule 66.4.
 For the examiner's obligation to consider amendments and/or arguments, see Rule 66.4bis.
 For an informal communication with the examiner, see Rule 66.6.

If no reply is filed, the international preliminary examination report will be established on the basis of this opinion.

4. The final date by which the international preliminary examination report must be established according to Rule 69.2 is: **27 December 2001**

Name and mailing address of the IPEA/AU AUSTRALIAN PATENT OFFICE PO BOX 200, WODEN ACT 2606, AUSTRALIA E-mail address: pct@ipaaustralia.gov.au Facsimile No. (02) 6285 3929	Authorized Officer <div style="text-align: center;"> </div> STEPHEN LEE Telephone No. (02) 6283 2205
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Signed sealed and delivered by
Justine Anne McCarthy
by:



Justine Anne McCarthy

Justine McCarthy
Name (please print)


Witness

Leon Chung
Name (please print)

Signed sealed and delivered by
FHP AUSTRALIA Pty LTD
by:


Secretary/Director

M. J. PILCHER
COMPANY SECRETARY
Name (please print)

The common seal of
FHP AUSTRALIA Pty LTD
is fixed to this document
in the presence of:


Secretary/Director
M. J. PILCHER
COMPANY SECRETARY

Name (please print)

Bruce K. Cutler
Director

BRUCE K. CUTLER
Name (please print)




Director

BRUCE K. CUTLER
Name (please print)

I. Basis of the opinion

1. With regard to the elements of the international application:*

- ☒ the international application as originally filed.
- ☐ the description, pages , as originally filed,
 pages , filed with the demand,
 pages , received on with the letter of
- ☐ the claims, pages , as originally filed,
 pages , as amended under Article 19,
 pages , filed with the demand,
 pages , received on with the letter of
- ☐ the drawings, pages , as originally filed,
 pages , filed with the demand,
 pages , received on with the letter of
- ☐ the sequence listing part of the description:
 pages , as originally filed
 pages , filed with the demand
 pages , received on with the letter of

2. With regard to the language, all the elements marked above were available or furnished to this Authority in the language in which the international application was filed, unless otherwise indicated under this item.

These elements were available or furnished to this Authority in the following language which is:

- ☐ the language of a translation furnished for the purposes of international search (under Rule 23.1(b)).
- ☐ the language of publication of the international application (under Rule 48.3(b)).
- ☐ the language of the translation furnished for the purposes of international preliminary examination (under Rules 55.2 and/or 55.3).

3. With regard to any nucleotide and/or amino acid sequence disclosed in the international application, the written opinion was drawn on the basis of the sequence listing:

- ☐ contained in the international application in printed form.
- ☐ filed together with the international application in computer readable form.
- ☐ furnished subsequently to this Authority in written form.
- ☐ furnished subsequently to this Authority in computer readable form.
- ☐ The statement that the subsequently furnished written sequence listing does not go beyond the disclosure in the international application as filed has been furnished.
- ☐ The statement that the information recorded in computer readable form is identical to the written sequence listing has been furnished.

4. ☐ The amendments have resulted in the cancellation of:

- ☐ the description, pages
- ☐ the claims, Nos.
- ☐ the drawings, sheets/fig.

5. ☐ This opinion has been established as if (some of) the amendments had not been made, since they have been considered to go beyond the disclosure as filed, as indicated in the Supplemental Box (Rule 70.2(c)).

* Replacement sheets which have been furnished to the receiving Office in response to an invitation under Article 14 are referred to in this opinion as "originally filed"

V. Reasoned statement under Rule 66.2(a)(ii) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement

1. Statement

Novelty (N)	Claims	YES
	Claims 1-28	NO
Inventive step (IS)	Claims	YES
	Claims 1-28	NO
Industrial applicability (IA)	Claims 1-28	YES
	Claims	NO

2. Citations and explanations

Novelty and Inventive Step Claims 1-28

US2182705

US5557515

Each of the citations individually disclose the features of the above claims.

VIII. Certain observations on the international application

The following observations on the clarity of the claims, description, and drawings or on the question whether the claims are fully supported by the description, are made:

Claims 27 and 28 do not comply with rule 6.2(a)

PATENT COOPERATION TREATY
PCT
INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION REPORT
(PCT Article 36 and Rule 70)

11 APR 2001

WIPO PCT

14

Applicant's or agent's file reference 2188781	FOR FURTHER ACTION	See Notification of Transmittal of International Preliminary Examination Report (Form PCT/IPEA/416).
International Application No. PCT/AU00/01017	International Filing Date (<i>day/month/year</i>) 28 August 2000	Priority Date (<i>day/month/year</i>) 27 August 1999
International Patent Classification (IPC) or national classification and IPC Int. Cl. ⁷ G06F 17/60		
Applicant FHP AUSTRALIA PTY LTD et al		

1.	This international preliminary examination report has been prepared by this International Preliminary Examining Authority and is transmitted to the applicant according to Article 36.																								
2.	This REPORT consists of a total of 3 sheets, including this cover sheet. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> This report is also accompanied by ANNEXES, i.e., sheets of the description, claims and/or drawings which have been amended and are the basis for this report and/or sheets containing rectifications made before this Authority (see Rule 70.16 and Section 607 of the Administrative Instructions under the PCT). These annexes consist of a total of 7 sheet(s).																								
3.	This report contains indications relating to the following items: <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"><tr><td style="width: 5%;">I</td><td style="width: 5%;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td><td>Basis of the report</td></tr><tr><td>II</td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>Priority</td></tr><tr><td>III</td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>Non-establishment of opinion with regard to novelty, inventive step and industrial applicability</td></tr><tr><td>IV</td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>Lack of unity of invention</td></tr><tr><td>V</td><td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td><td>Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement</td></tr><tr><td>VI</td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>Certain documents cited</td></tr><tr><td>VII</td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>Certain defects in the international application</td></tr><tr><td>VIII</td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td>Certain observations on the international application</td></tr></table>	I	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Basis of the report	II	<input type="checkbox"/>	Priority	III	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-establishment of opinion with regard to novelty, inventive step and industrial applicability	IV	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lack of unity of invention	V	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement	VI	<input type="checkbox"/>	Certain documents cited	VII	<input type="checkbox"/>	Certain defects in the international application	VIII	<input type="checkbox"/>	Certain observations on the international application
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Date of submission of the demand 25 January 2001	Date of completion of the report 28 March 2001
Name and mailing address of the IPEA/AU AUSTRALIAN PATENT OFFICE PO BOX 200, WODEN ACT 2606, AUSTRALIA E-mail address: pct@ipaaustralia.gov.au Facsimile No. (02) 6285 3929	Authorized Officer <div style="text-align: center;"> Stephen Lee Telephone No. (02) 6283 2205</div>

I. Basis of the report**1. With regard to the elements of the international application:***

- ☐ the international application as originally filed.
- ☒ the description, pages **1,4-19** as originally filed,
pages , filed with the demand,
pages **2-3a**, received on **16 March 2001** with the letter of **16 March 2001**
- ☒ the claims, pages , as originally filed,
pages , as amended (together with any statement) under Article 19,
pages , filed with the demand,
pages **20-22a**, received on **16 March 2001** with the letter of **16 March 2001**
- ☒ the drawings, pages **1-13**, as originally filed,
pages , filed with the demand,
pages , received on with the letter of
- ☐ the sequence listing part of the description:
pages , as originally filed
pages , filed with the demand
pages , received on with the letter of

2. With regard to the language, all the elements marked above were available or furnished to this Authority in the language in which the international application was filed, unless otherwise indicated under this item.

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- ☐ furnished subsequently to this Authority in written form.
- ☐ furnished subsequently to this Authority in computer readable form.
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- ☐ the drawings, sheets/fig.

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** Any replacement sheet containing such amendments must be referred to under item 1 and annexed to this report

V. Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement**1. Statement**

Novelty (N)	Claims 1-28	YES
	Claims	NO
Inventive step (IS)	Claims 1-28	YES
	Claims	NO
Industrial applicability (IA)	Claims 1-28	YES
	Claims	NO

2. Citations and explanations (Rule 70.7)

Novelty and Inventive Step Claims 1-28

US 5182705

US 5557515

None of the citations either individually or in obvious combination disclose the invention of the above claims.

Where in the specification the term "due date" is used, it is to be interpreted broadly to include within its scope a calendar date and/or time in which a specified event, action or milestone must be executed.

Summary of the invention

According to a first aspect of the present invention there is provided an information management system able to assist with the management and monitoring of a multiplicity of documents containing rights and/or obligations including due dates arising out of a plurality of primary documents, the system including:

a database adapted to store in an electronic and searchable format the plurality of primary documents;

an electronic diary system which records at least selected due dates arising out of the primary documents and which is linked to the database such that a user is able to directly access the primary documents to which the due dates pertain;

access means for use in interrogating the database and diary system; and

display means for selectively displaying both the due dates and the primary documents to which said due dates pertain.

According to a second aspect of the present invention there is provided a method for implementing an information management system able to assist with the management and monitoring of a multiplicity of documents containing rights and/or obligations including due dates arising out of a plurality of primary documents, the method including the steps of:

providing a database adapted to store in an electronic and searchable format the plurality of primary documents;

providing an electronic diary system which records at least selected due dates arising out of the primary documents and which is electronically linked to the database such that a user is able to access the primary documents to which the due dates pertain directly via said electronic link;

providing access means for use in interrogating the database and diary system; and

providing display means for selectively displaying both the due dates and the primary documents to which said due dates pertain.

Preferably each primary document is divided into a series of sections and said electronic link allows access to the section of the primary document to which a particular due date pertains.

In the preferred form of the invention the database may be divided into sections, each section cross referenced to the others, the sections including at least a first section which incorporates summaries of each of the primary documents stored in the database, a second section which incorporates the primary document themselves, and a third section which incorporates the defined terms in each of the primary documents. Furthermore, the database may include a fourth section of related documents, ie, documents which in some way or another relate to the primary documents. Those related documents may be in the form of advices, correspondence, annexures, contact details, standard clauses, or the like.

Preferably the database is sortable. For example, the documents may be sortable by title, by topic, or by party. Further possible sort topics may be appropriate such as, for example, sorting by obligation, creation date, level of importance, and various subject matter topics. Thus, arranging and organising of the database can be determined in accordance with nature of the documents and the purpose for which the documents might be required by a person wishing to access the documents. Different types of projects might require different sort categories.

Preferably the system also includes a cross-referencing facility which allows details of one or more primary documents to be linked to details of related primary documents such that when a user actions a due date and/or obligation associated with one or more primary documents, said user is alerted of due dates and/or obligations to be actioned on related documents.

The electronic diary system will preferably record all applicable dates which arise out of the documents. The diary system will preferably have some form of notification arrangement associated therewith, such as an appropriate notification message (ie such as electronic mail) being sent to an appropriate individual, which will be generated, preferably automatically at specified times prior to when each due date occurs and/or on the due date itself. A diary date may be entered into the electronic diary automatically when the primary document is entered into the database, or it may be entered manually by the person loading the document into the database. Preferably the diary entry will include an appropriate cross referencing arrangement so that each diary entry is cross referenced to the portion of the particular document which causes that diary entry to be generated. For example, a diary date could be cross-linked to the clause in the particular primary document which generated the diary entry.

Preferably the system is integrated into a communications network (ie such as the internet or an intranet) and reminders generated by the system are forwarded via the network to individuals who take responsibility for carrying out the tasks to which the due dates relate. Reminders may also be sent to others who monitor whether those tasks have been carried out.

Optionally the system may be updated or maintained or monitored using the communications network and, indeed, new documents and diary entries may be added to the system via such network.

The access means for use in interrogating the database and diary system may comprise a keyboard and screen so that the system is readily accessible using a personal computer connected to the database. The display means for displaying details of the documents may, similarly, comprise a personal computer, or it may comprise a printout, electronic message forwarded to a personal computer, or any other appropriate display or message generation means.

The documents with which the system may operate may be of any appropriate nature. Typically each document will have a multiplicity of rights and/or obligations including due dates associated therewith. Those dates would typically be internal to the documents and may be distributed in different clauses spread throughout the document, or they may be dates which are external to the documents but which relate to the transaction of which the documents form a part.

One of the more appropriate uses of the system could be for the monitoring of a multiplicity of different and multiparty contracts entered into by a range of different parties. The system will also be suitable for dealing with a range of other types of documents such as patent specifications, staff reports, personnel documents, prospectuses, bid documents, performance reports, trust deeds, constitutions, multiple leases, funds management agreements and

3a

the like. Such documents may be collated and managed, and due dates associated with such documents monitored, using the system of the invention.

Brief description of the drawings

5 An embodiment of the invention is described below by way of example with reference to the accompanying illustrations. It will be appreciated that the example selected is but one possible use of the system and therefore should not be construed as in any way limiting the ambit of the invention.

Figs. 1 - 12 show example screens which would be presented to a user employing the system for managing a plurality of contracts.

10 Fig. 13 is an information flow diagram of an information management system accessible to multiple users via a communications network according to the present invention.

Claims

1. An information management system able to assist with the management and monitoring of a multiplicity of documents containing rights and/or obligations including due dates, arising out of a plurality of primary documents, the system including:
 - a database adapted to store in an electronic and searchable format the plurality of primary documents;
 - an electronic diary system which records at least selected due dates arising out of the primary documents and which is electronically linked to the database such that a user is able to access the primary documents to which the due dates pertain directly via said electronic link;
 - access means for use in interrogating the database and diary system; and
 - display means for selectively displaying both the due dates and the primary documents to which said due dates pertain.
2. An information management system according to claim 1 wherein each primary document is divided into a series of sections and said electronic link allows access to the section of the primary document to which a particular due date pertains.
3. An information management system according to claim 1 wherein said system includes a cross-referencing facility which allows details of one or more primary documents to be linked to details of related primary documents such that when a user actions a due date and/or obligation associated with one or more primary documents, said user is alerted of due dates and/or obligations to be actioned on related documents.
4. An information management system according to claim 1, wherein said database is divided into sections, each section cross referenced to the others, the sections including:
 - at least a first section which incorporates summaries of each of the primary documents stored in said database;
 - a second section which incorporates the primary document themselves, and a third section which incorporates the defined terms in each of the primary documents.
5. An information management system according to claim 4, wherein said database further includes:
 - a fourth section of related documents in the form of advices, correspondence, annexures, contact details, or standard clauses, which relate to the primary documents.
6. An information management system according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein said database is sortable by a variety of predefined sort categories.
7. An information management system according to claim 1, wherein said electronic diary system records all due dates which arise out of the documents on which an action must be taken.
8. An electronic diary system according to claim 7, wherein said electronic diary system contains a means of notifying appropriate individuals prior to and/or on each due date.

9. An information management system according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein said information management system is accessible to one or more client users on a communications network.
10. An information management system according to claim 9, wherein said communications network includes the Internet, intranet, and local area network (LAN).
11. An information management system according to claims 9 or 10, wherein reminders generated by said information management system are forwarded via said communication network to individuals who take responsibility for carrying out the tasks to which the due dates relate.
12. An information management system according to claim 9, wherein said information management system can be updated, maintained or monitored by said client users over said communications network.
13. An information management system according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein said documents have a multiplicity of rights and/or obligations including due dates internal to said documents and distributed in different clauses spread throughout said documents.
14. An information management system according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein said documents have a multiplicity of rights and/or obligations including due dates external to said documents but which relate to the transaction of which said documents form a part.
15. A method for implementing an information management system able to assist with the management and monitoring of a multiplicity of documents containing rights and/or obligations including due dates arising out of a plurality of primary documents, said method including the steps of:
 - providing a database adapted to store in an electronic and searchable format the plurality of primary documents;
 - providing an electronic diary system which records at least selected due dates arising out of the primary documents and which is electronically linked to the database such that a user is able to access the primary documents to which the due dates pertain directly via said electronic link;
 - providing access means for use in interrogating the database and diary system; and
 - providing display means for selectively displaying both the due dates and the primary documents to which said due dates pertain.
16. A method according to claim 15, wherein each primary document is divided into a series of sections and said electronic link allows access to the section of the primary document to which a particular due date pertains.
17. A method according to claim 15, wherein said method further provides a cross-referencing facility which allows details of one or more primary documents to be linked to details of related primary documents such that when a user actions a due date and/or obligation associated with one or more primary documents, said user is alerted of due dates and/or obligations to be actioned on related documents.
18. A method according to claim 15, wherein said method provides a database which is divided into sections, each section cross referenced to the others, the sections including:

at least a first section which incorporates summaries of each of the primary documents stored in said database;

a second section which incorporates the primary document themselves, and a third section which incorporates the defined terms in each of the primary documents.

19. A method according to claim 15, wherein said method provides a database which further includes a fourth section of related documents in the form of advices, correspondence, annexures, contact details, or standard clauses, which relate to the primary documents.
20. A method according to any one of claims 15 to 19, wherein said database is sortable by a variety of predefined sort categories.
21. A method according to claim 15, wherein said electronic diary system records all due dates which arise out of the documents on which an action must be taken.
22. A method according to claim 21, wherein said electronic diary system contains a means of notifying appropriate individuals prior to and/or on each due date.
23. A method of implementing an information management system according to claim 15 wherein said information management system is accessible to one or more client users on a communications network.
24. A method according to claim 23 wherein said communications network includes the Internet, intranet, and local area network (LAN).
25. A method according to claims 23 or 24, wherein reminders generated by said information management system are forwarded via said communication network to individuals who take responsibility for carrying out the tasks to which the due dates relate.
26. A method according to claim 23, wherein said information management system can be updated, maintained or monitored by said client users over said communications network.
27. A method according to any one of claims 15 to 26, wherein said method provides for access to documents having a multiplicity of rights and/or obligations including due dates internal to said documents and distributed in different clauses spread throughout said documents.
28. A method according to any one of claims 15 to 26, wherein said method provides for access to documents having a multiplicity of rights and/or obligations including due dates external to said documents but which relate to the transaction of which said documents form a part.

22a

29. An information management system able to assist with the management and monitoring of a multiplicity of documents containing rights and/or obligations including due dates, arising out of a plurality of primary documents, substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to the accompanying drawings.
30. A method for implementing an information management system substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to the accompanying drawings.

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The Commissioner of Patents
PCT Unit
IP Australia
PO Box 200
Woden ACT 2606

Dear Sir

FHP Australia Pty Ltd
International patent application no PCT/AU00/01017
An information management system

We refer to the written opinion issued on the above application. The Examiner argues that claims 1-28 of the present invention lack novelty and inventive step in light of US patent no. 5,182,705 and 5,557,515.

Each of these patents relates to a computerised work management system, the later patent describing an improvement of the system first disclosed in the earlier patent. The computerised systems disclosed in these patents include a database containing case-specific information and a diary system to alert users of impending due dates on individual cases. The systems also include a searching function enabling case information to be retrieved from the database using keywords, such as a client name.

US patents 5,182,705 and 5,557,515 deal with a somewhat elementary computerised management system. That is, the system described in these documents provides a computer which, inter alia, includes a diary system and a document storage system.

In contrast, the information management system of the present invention is considerably more sophisticated. This system allows for links to be established between inter-related matters and an integrated diary system.

A key novel feature of the present invention is that when a diary reminder is generated and displayed on a user's screen, that displayed reminder acts as a direct link through which the user can access the particular document defining the right, obligation or the like which necessitated the generation of the reminder.

As a simple example, suppose a contract of lease provided in a particular clause that the lease could be renewed if notice of intention to renew were given by a particular date. On that date an electronic reminder would be generated on a user's screen. That reminder could be used by the user as a direct electronic link to the relevant clause in the contract. That facility, when provided for multiple contracts and agreements, each defining a multiplicity of dates/times, can be of significant assistance to a user whose function it is to monitor the obligations generated by those contracts and agreements.

The claims of the present application have been amended to clarify the novel and inventive features of the invention. Accordingly we enclose substitute claim pages 20-22a together with substitute pages 2, 3 and 3a.

In light of the above arguments and amendments we submit that the information management system of the present application is indeed novel and inventive with respect to US patents 5,182,705 and 5,557,515.

Yours faithfully
FREEHILLS CARTER SMITH BEADLE

Paul Savage

Where in the specification the term "due date" is used, it is to be interpreted broadly to include within its scope a calendar date and/or time in which a specified event, action or milestone must be executed.

Summary of the invention

According to a first aspect of the present invention there is provided an information management system able to assist with the management and monitoring of a multiplicity of documents containing rights and/or obligations including due dates arising out of a plurality of primary documents, the system including:

a database adapted to store in an electronic and searchable format the plurality of primary documents;

an electronic diary system which records at least selected due dates arising out of the primary documents and which is linked to the database such that a user is able to directly access the primary documents to which the due dates pertain;

access means for use in interrogating the database and diary system; and

display means for selectively displaying both the due dates and the primary documents to which said due dates pertain.

According to a second aspect of the present invention there is provided a method for implementing an information management system able to assist with the management and monitoring of a multiplicity of documents containing rights and/or obligations including due dates arising out of a plurality of primary documents, the method including the steps of:

providing a database adapted to store in an electronic and searchable format the plurality of primary documents;

providing an electronic diary system which records at least selected due dates arising out of the primary documents and which is electronically linked to the database such that a user is able to access the primary documents to which the due dates pertain directly via said electronic link;

providing access means for use in interrogating the database and diary system; and

providing display means for selectively displaying both the due dates and the primary documents to which said due dates pertain.

Preferably each primary document is divided into a series of sections and said electronic link allows access to the section of the primary document to which a particular due date pertains.

In the preferred form of the invention the database may be divided into sections, each section cross referenced to the others, the sections including at least a first section which incorporates summaries of each of the primary documents stored in the database, a second section which incorporates the primary document themselves, and a third section which incorporates the defined terms in each of the primary documents. Furthermore, the database may include a fourth section of related documents, ie, documents which in some way or another relate to the primary documents. Those related documents may be in the form of advices, correspondence, annexures, contact details, standard clauses, or the like.

Preferably the database is sortable. For example, the documents may be sortable by title, by topic, or by party. Further possible sort topics may be appropriate such as, for example, sorting by obligation, creation date, level of importance, and various subject matter topics. Thus, arranging and organising of the database can be determined in accordance with nature of the documents and the purpose for which the documents might be required by a person wishing to access the documents. Different types of projects might require different sort categories.

Preferably the system also includes a cross-referencing facility which allows details of one or more primary documents to be linked to details of related primary documents such that when a user actions a due date and/or obligation associated with one or more primary documents, said user is alerted of due dates and/or obligations to be actioned on related documents.

The electronic diary system will preferably record all applicable dates which arise out of the documents. The diary system will preferably have some form of notification arrangement associated therewith, such as an appropriate notification message (ie such as electronic mail) being sent to an appropriate individual, which will be generated, preferably automatically at specified times prior to when each due date occurs and/or on the due date itself. A diary date may be entered into the electronic diary automatically when the primary document is entered into the database, or it may be entered manually by the person loading the document into the database. Preferably the diary entry will include an appropriate cross referencing arrangement so that each diary entry is cross referenced to the portion of the particular document which causes that diary entry to be generated. For example, a diary date could be cross-linked to the clause in the particular primary document which generated the diary entry.

Preferably the system is integrated into a communications network (ie such as the internet or an intranet) and reminders generated by the system are forwarded via the network to individuals who take responsibility for carrying out the tasks to which the due dates relate. Reminders may also be sent to others who monitor whether those tasks have been carried out.

Optionally the system may be updated or maintained or monitored using the communications network and, indeed, new documents and diary entries may be added to the system via such network.

The access means for use in interrogating the database and diary system may comprise a keyboard and screen so that the system is readily accessible using a personal computer connected to the database. The display means for displaying details of the documents may, similarly, comprise a personal computer, or it may comprise a printout, electronic message forwarded to a personal computer, or any other appropriate display or message generation means.

The documents with which the system may operate may be of any appropriate nature. Typically each document will have a multiplicity of rights and/or obligations including due dates associated therewith. Those dates would typically be internal to the documents and may be distributed in different clauses spread throughout the document, or they may be dates which are external to the documents but which relate to the transaction of which the documents form a part.

One of the more appropriate uses of the system could be for the monitoring of a multiplicity of different and multiparty contracts entered into by a range of different parties. The system will also be suitable for dealing with a range of other types of documents such as patent specifications, staff reports, personnel documents, prospectuses, bid documents, performance reports, trust deeds, constitutions, multiple leases, funds management agreements and

the like. Such documents may be collated and managed, and due dates associated with such documents monitored, using the system of the invention.

Brief description of the drawings

5 An embodiment of the invention is described below by way of example with reference to the accompanying illustrations. It will be appreciated that the example selected is but one possible use of the system and therefore should not be construed as in any way limiting the ambit of the invention.

Figs. 1 - 12 show example screens which would be presented to a user employing the system for managing a plurality of contracts.

10 Fig. 13 is an information flow diagram of an information management system accessible to multiple users via a communications network according to the present invention.

Claims

1. An information management system able to assist with the management and monitoring of a multiplicity of documents containing rights and/or obligations including due dates, arising out of a plurality of primary documents, the system including:
 - a database adapted to store in an electronic and searchable format the plurality of primary documents;
 - an electronic diary system which records at least selected due dates arising out of the primary documents and which is electronically linked to the database such that a user is able to access the primary documents to which the due dates pertain directly via said electronic link;
 - access means for use in interrogating the database and diary system; and
 - display means for selectively displaying both the due dates and the primary documents to which said due dates pertain.
2. An information management system according to claim 1 wherein each primary document is divided into a series of sections and said electronic link allows access to the section of the primary document to which a particular due date pertains.
3. An information management system according to claim 1 wherein said system includes a cross-referencing facility which allows details of one or more primary documents to be linked to details of related primary documents such that when a user actions a due date and/or obligation associated with one or more primary documents, said user is alerted of due dates and/or obligations to be actioned on related documents.
4. An information management system according to claim 1, wherein said database is divided into sections, each section cross referenced to the others, the sections including:
 - at least a first section which incorporates summaries of each of the primary documents stored in said database;
 - a second section which incorporates the primary document themselves, and a third section which incorporates the defined terms in each of the primary documents.
5. An information management system according to claim 4, wherein said database further includes:
 - a fourth section of related documents in the form of advices, correspondence, annexures, contact details, or standard clauses, which relate to the primary documents.
6. An information management system according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein said database is sortable by a variety of predefined sort categories.
7. An information management system according to claim 1, wherein said electronic diary system records all due dates which arise out of the documents on which an action must be taken.
8. An electronic diary system according to claim 7, wherein said electronic diary system contains a means of notifying appropriate individuals prior to and/or on each due date.

9. An information management system according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein said information management system is accessible to one or more client users on a communications network.
10. An information management system according to claim 9, wherein said communications network includes the Internet, intranet, and local area network (LAN).
11. An information management system according to claims 9 or 10, wherein reminders generated by said information management system are forwarded via said communication network to individuals who take responsibility for carrying out the tasks to which the due dates relate.
12. An information management system according to claim 9, wherein said information management system can be updated, maintained or monitored by said client users over said communications network.
13. An information management system according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein said documents have a multiplicity of rights and/or obligations including due dates internal to said documents and distributed in different clauses spread throughout said documents.
14. An information management system according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein said documents have a multiplicity of rights and/or obligations including due dates external to said documents but which relate to the transaction of which said documents form a part.
15. A method for implementing an information management system able to assist with the management and monitoring of a multiplicity of documents containing rights and/or obligations including due dates arising out of a plurality of primary documents, said method including the steps of:
 - providing a database adapted to store in an electronic and searchable format the plurality of primary documents;
 - providing an electronic diary system which records at least selected due dates arising out of the primary documents and which is electronically linked to the database such that a user is able to access the primary documents to which the due dates pertain directly via said electronic link;
 - providing access means for use in interrogating the database and diary system; and
 - providing display means for selectively displaying both the due dates and the primary documents to which said due dates pertain.
16. A method according to claim 15, wherein each primary document is divided into a series of sections and said electronic link allows access to the section of the primary document to which a particular due date pertains.
17. A method according to claim 15, wherein said method further provides a cross-referencing facility which allows details of one or more primary documents to be linked to details of related primary documents such that when a user actions a due date and/or obligation associated with one or more primary documents, said user is alerted of due dates and/or obligations to be actioned on related documents.
18. A method according to claim 15, wherein said method provides a database which is divided into sections, each section cross referenced to the others, the sections including:

at least a first section which incorporates summaries of each of the primary documents stored in said database;

a second section which incorporates the primary document themselves, and a third section which incorporates the defined terms in each of the primary documents.

19. A method according to claim 15, wherein said method provides a database which further includes a fourth section of related documents in the form of advices, correspondence, annexures, contact details, or standard clauses, which relate to the primary documents.
20. A method according to any one of claims 15 to 19, wherein said database is sortable by a variety of predefined sort categories.
21. A method according to claim 15, wherein said electronic diary system records all due dates which arise out of the documents on which an action must be taken.
22. A method according to claim 21, wherein said electronic diary system contains a means of notifying appropriate individuals prior to and/or on each due date.
23. A method of implementing an information management system according to claim 15 wherein said information management system is accessible to one or more client users on a communications network.
24. A method according to claim 23 wherein said communications network includes the Internet, intranet, and local area network (LAN).
25. A method according to claims 23 or 24, wherein reminders generated by said information management system are forwarded via said communication network to individuals who take responsibility for carrying out the tasks to which the due dates relate.
26. A method according to claim 23, wherein said information management system can be updated, maintained or monitored by said client users over said communications network.
27. A method according to any one of claims 15 to 26, wherein said method provides for access to documents having a multiplicity of rights and/or obligations including due dates internal to said documents and distributed in different clauses spread throughout said documents.
28. A method according to any one of claims 15 to 26, wherein said method provides for access to documents having a multiplicity of rights and/or obligations including due dates external to said documents but which relate to the transaction of which said documents form a part.

22a

29. An information management system able to assist with the management and monitoring of a multiplicity of documents containing rights and/or obligations including due dates, arising out of a plurality of primary documents, substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to the accompanying drawings.
30. A method for implementing an information management system substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to the accompanying drawings.